Chronicles

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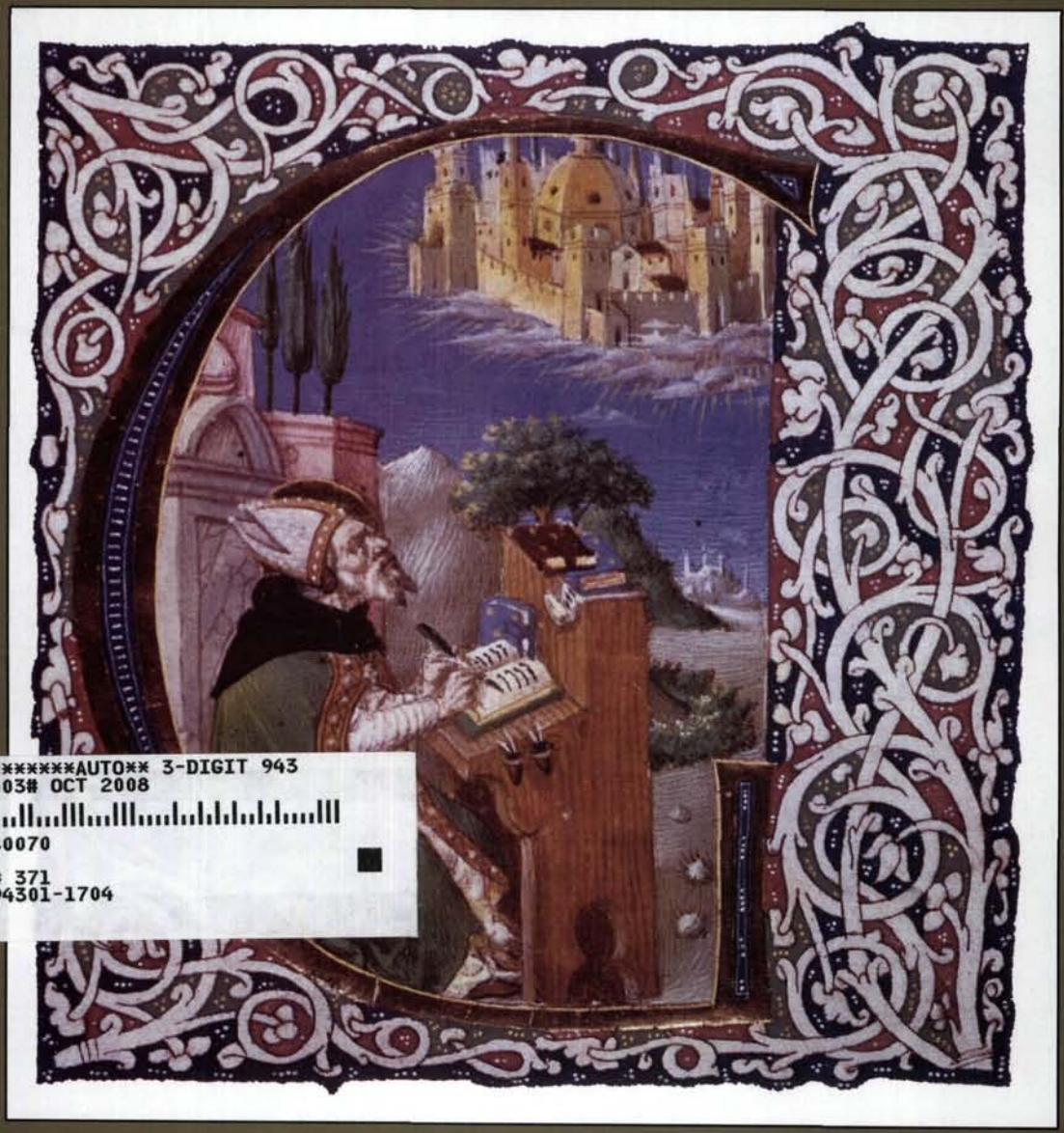
The City of God



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Chronicles' Back Issues, Tapes, and Books

* Shakespeare and the Tudor Revolution, Part II *

RECUSANT POETRY—Audiotape—"Poetry must be used," argues Fr. Hugh Barbour, "When the truths considered so exceed reason as to be incapable of complete expression in rational or dialectical terms." The spirit of martyrdom, expressed in the poetry of the Roman Catholic recusants of the Protestant Reformation in England, is one such truth.
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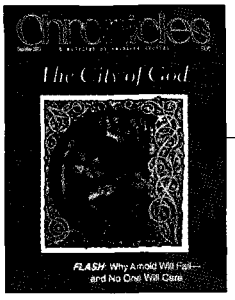

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On the *Via Descartes*

I enjoyed Thomas Fleming's article in praise of Aristotle ("Back to Reality," *Perspective*, September). The best way to introduce our children to philosophy is to teach them Aristotle's proof for the existence of God and his proof for human immortality, with some embellishment and clarification from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, then to bring out the timeless freshness of the essential ideas in modern prose. Let that foundation be firmly laid in a young mind, and it will naturally mature and deepen, nor will the pseudo-urbanity of contemporary philosophy shake it. On that foundation, life can be successfully and meaningfully lived in this world.

But then, out of the blue, Dr. Fleming says at the end of his essay, "The road that leads from Descartes to Locke to Mill to Marx is the road to the madhouse." How is it that all such philosophical evils are traced to René Descartes?

For some years, it has been fashionable in some Catholic circles to blame Descartes for such excess emphasis on doubt and reason that faith in the invisible becomes impossible and the mystery of life can never be felt in wonderment. Such faith and wonderment are the essence of the Catholic view of life—that I grant. But Descartes, it is said, is the father of "modern" thought, which supposedly leads to a materialistic and atheistic view of life. That simply is not so. The "methodical doubt" of Descartes was not the cheap doubt used by the likes of Bertrand Russell to hoodwink us into believing that it is not necessary to demand a cause for everything, least of all a cause for the universe, which is "just there, and that's all." The methodical doubt of Descartes was a wholesome philosophical exercise to teach the mind that, as sure of our senses as we have a right to be, the rational examination of consciousness is incomparably superior in the certainty and lucidity yielded. He broke our bad habit of excessive reliance on "common sense," which tells us that reality is exclusively what we touch and feel. Descartes did not lead us away from mystical truth. On the contrary, he invited us to confront it directly and, when doing so, not to fear the use of reason in dealing with it. The nature of reason as the crowning dignity of mankind, after all, is what induced Aristotle to say that the human soul is eternal and Descartes to say that the soul is distinct from the body and can exist without it.

—John Remington Graham
St-Agapit, Quebec

Dr. Fleming Replies:

My friend Jack Graham shall have to wait for my book, *The Morality of Everyday Life* (Spring 2004), for a more detailed critique of the Cartesian methods that undermined Christian philosophy. In my *Perspective*, I said nothing of atheism or of Bertrand Russell. Specifically, I was referring to the rejection of Aristotle's distinction between the methods of exact science and those that apply to human life. Descartes is the first to have proposed the abstract techniques of "moral algebra" adopted later by Leibniz, Locke, and other Enlightenment intellectuals. Such pernicious nonsense gave rise to the so-called social sciences (as my old Greek professor used to say) that have wrought nothing but mischief in our world. His harping on doubt, while giving the appearance of humility, actually has the effect of putting Descartes at the center of the universe, which he will by his own efforts renew. His completely mechanistic account of human feelings in *The Passions* is as ludicrous as anything proposed by Watson and Skinner.

Like other irrational rationalists, Descartes was attracted to the bogus mysticism of his day, and, in his youth, he went off looking for the mythical Rosicrucians. In searching for a Christian or conservative Descartes, his defenders today, Catholic or not, are on as futile a quest.

On Jefferson's Honor

As a long-time reader and supporter of *Chronicles*, I am a little puzzled by your persistent efforts to debunk the "myth" that Thomas Jefferson took his quadroon chambermaid Sally Hemings as a concubine. While I agree with Samuel Francis, Egon Tausch, and now Matthew

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Rarey (*Cultural Revolutions*, September) that the legacy of Thomas Jefferson is one conservatives ought to preserve, I remain unconvinced that the alleged liaison would seriously undermine that legacy. In fact, its acceptance might go far in repairing black-white racial relations. As Mr. Rarey concedes, sexual relations between white masters and black slaves were not that uncommon in the antebellum South. On its face, this would appear to be a major example of racial exploitation and oppression. Yet we have the strange spectacle of blacks today eagerly clamoring for recognition as the descendants of these illegitimate pairings, while whites steadfastly deny their claims. The assumption seems to be that the renewed interest in the "scandal" is intended to paint the Founding Fathers as a bunch of degenerates so that we moderns, who are the genuine article, might live with easier consciences.

Yet even if everything Fawn Brodie wrote in her biography of Jefferson is true, the third president's philanderings were a far cry from those of his namesake, the 42nd president. Mrs. Brodie takes pains to point out Jefferson's gallant and chivalrous attitude toward women, in contrast with the image of the stony man of reason that has been handed down to us. His was the traditional attitude that clearly understood the different roles of the sexes, not the sort of debauchery represented by Bill Clinton and Clinton's true presidential role model, John F. Kennedy.

According to Brodie, Jefferson, at age 39, made a vow to his wife on her deathbed that he would never remarry. He never did, but several years later, as ambassador to France, he took his 16-year-old slave as a concubine. The book claims she bore him four children, but there is no allegation that either he or Hemings had any other sexual relations from this time until Jefferson's death nearly 40 years later. Thus, there is no claim of adultery. I hesitate even to call it fornication, inasmuch as their marriage would have been forbidden by Virginia law. Are conservatives really so puritanical that evidence of such a discreet relationship would destroy their cherished conception of the author of the Declaration of Independence? Those of us who would defend the institutions of the Old South should welcome Sally Hemings' well-intentioned descendants, not offer them the back of the hand.

—Chas Baylor
St. Mary's, KS

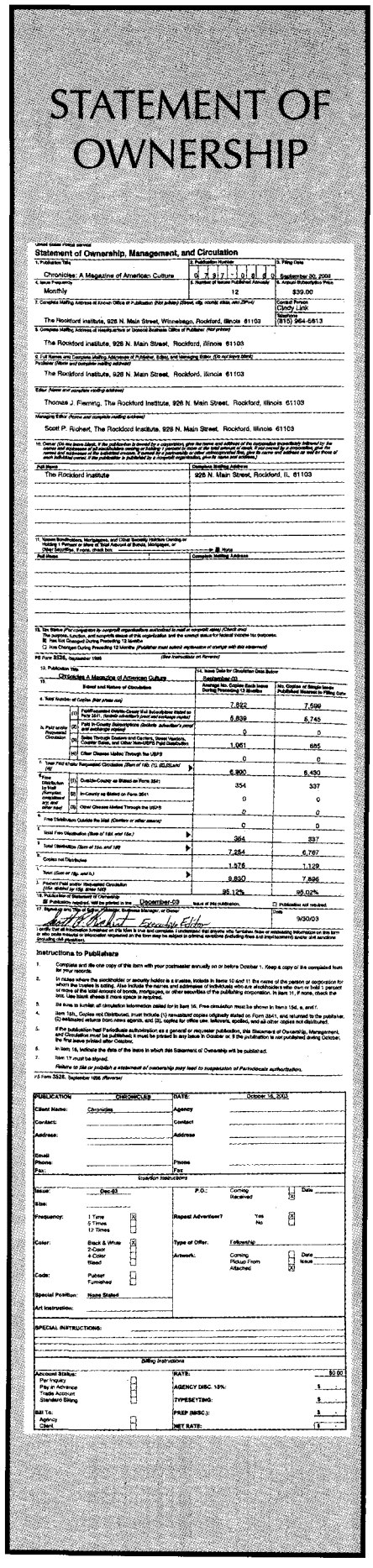
Mr. Rarey Replies:

If Thomas Jefferson sired offspring by his slave Sally Hemings, I cannot conceive how this would have contributed to the racial harmony and melodrama of star-crossed lovers that Mr. Baylor imagines. To do so would mean ignoring historical evidence and common sense.

Certainly there were master-slave couplings in early America, as there have been in similar circumstances throughout history. Indeed, scholarship indicates that Jefferson's younger brother Randolph had such relations, repeatedly and shamelessly. Obviously, such behavior is unmanly; and, if Thomas Jefferson were guilty of it, it would put him—a man who so prized his upright reputation—in a baser league than that of Bill Clinton, a transparent rogue who justifies his crimes and misdemeanors by claiming, "I'm just a poor sinner like the rest of you."

Mr. Baylor's letter raises a few questions. First, would an honorable man refuse to acknowledge his supposed lover (Hemings) and, according to his will, leave her and the children he purportedly sired by her in bondage, perhaps to be sold off to pay his debts? Would such behavior evidence a "gallant and chivalrous attitude toward women" or "a major example of racial exploitation and oppression"? Is it virtuous to promise a dying wife never to remarry if that promise excludes out-of-wedlock profligacy of an especially ignominious nature? And is it wise to trust Fawn Brodie, whom historians have roundly panned for her sex-obsessed psychohistory? The answers are self-evident.

It is right and proper to defend Jefferson against smears, first advanced by political enemies in the Federal-era equivalent of supermarket tabloids and nowadays pushed by persons of pernicious intent. (Hemings' descendants may be eager to claim Jefferson as their great white father—some have made good money selling this historical snake oil—but few actually revere him.) Jefferson's legacy as a Founding Father and a man of noble deeds and character must not be allowed to be warped into that of a deadbeat dad and highbrow hypocrite. This is a cause truly worth pledging one's sacred honor.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by Samuel Francis

The *Untergang* of Our Gang

The Bush administration and its heavyweights spent the latter portion of this past summer trying to explain to themselves, to one another, and to American voters why the policies it has inflicted on the nation have not really been the unmitigated disaster they have proved to be. Attorney General John Ashcroft tried to defend the PATRIOT Act and similar internal-security measures that have managed to alienate both the ACLU left and the mainstream right. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Princess Condoleezza Rice, and Vice President Dick Cheney (not to mention the President) were unleashed to defend, explain, and invent new justifications for the murderous Iraqi quicksands into which they have dragged the country.

Yet even their fertile imaginations proved inadequate. Most of what the administration's spokesmen claimed was virtually identical to the distortions, exaggerations, unsupported speculations, and outright lies—about WMD's, the Saddam-September 11 link, the bucolic happiness of Iraqis with the American Global Democracy that has now swallowed their country—that the same people served us before the war and before they had been disproved by experience (as opposed to the common sense that rejected them originally). On top of these difficulties, the U.S. economy sputtered and sighed, with unemployment at more than six percent and the number of workers unemployed for more than six months at its highest level since 1992—an ominous year for presidents named Bush.

By mid-October, political tea-leaf readers in Washington were discerning signs that the administration's leaders were starting to turn on one another, measuring their own colleagues to see who looked good to take the blame for the boondoggles. CIA Director George Tenet, who probably had less to do with concocting the lies about the nonexistent WMD's than most in the Bush high command did, seemed to be the logical candidate. Mrs. Rice suddenly emerged as the commissar responsible for the "reconstruction" of Iraq after its glorious liberation by the Yanks last spring, taking that choice morsel from Mr. Rumsfeld's own platter (the secretary seemed none too pleased, snapping angrily at reporters who asked too many questions about it). Then there was the little matter of which neocon munchkin in the administration leaked the identity of Ambassador Joseph Wilson's wife as a CIA agent to erstwhile "unpatriotic conservative" Bob Novak, a deed that could earn the perpetrator a federal prison sentence. (Inside dopesters pointed either to convicted felon Elliott Abrams in the National Security Council or to some other neocon in the Vice President's office.) In the nation's capital, as well as in parts of the country where the truth can still be expressed, the suspicion was that the Bush administration was starting to crumble from within.

Aside from internal Cabinet food fights, the most obvious crumble was within the GOP, with even the dittohead stalwarts of the Stupid Party grousing about the $87 billion Mr. Bush requested to complete the cakewalk to global democratic utopia in Baghdad. Eventually, the administration got most of the swag, but not without some embarrassing moments and unpleasant back talk from Congress.

Then came California, and everything was OK again. Arnold ousted the odious Gray Davis, beat the preposterous Cruz Bustamante, and even won some 30 percent of the Hispanic vote. The latter accomplishment caused the pundits on the East Coast to warble cheerfully. In the *Weekly Standard*, Fred Barnes gabbled about the impending "Republican realignment" that the California recall confirmed beyond doubt. The illustrious Novak proclaimed that California now proved that Bush could win the state next year and thereby salvage himself from oblivion. "The principal reason to think that Bush can carry California in 2004 after losing it so badly in 2000," he wrote, "is the changing Latino vote. . . . Latinos are in play politically."

Latinos are not "in play politically." They gave 30 percent of their votes to Arnold this year in California. In 2000, California Latinos gave 28 percent of their vote to Mr. Bush, who had pandered sedulously to them and did not have Schwarzenegger's "baggage" of having supported Proposition 187 in 1994. A two-percent gain (assuming it is outside the margin of error of the exit polls) is insignificant: Hispanic voters have consistently delivered about 30 percent of their vote to Republicans in most elections since at least 1972. There is no evidence that any more than that are leaning Republican.

Yet winning the Latino vote is a straw at which Republicans and the neoconservatives who have shamelessly exploited the pitiful President to pursue their own wars and policies abroad have to snatch. George W. Bush won the election in 2000 only after protracted and probably extralegal shenanigans over the Florida vote, and he lost the popular vote outright. Had Ralph Nader not been on the ballot, Al Gore would have won the election easily, and Mr. Nader probably will not be in the race next year.

What remains for the Bush boys is the white vote. Steve Sailer, a veteran political analyst for United Press International and a frequent contributor to *VDare.com*, has long argued (as have I) that the key to Republican victory lies in capturing as much of the white vote as possible, not in pandering to minorities who will not support any right-of-center ticket anyway. Schwarzenegger won California with a majority of the white vote this year, and Mr. Bush won with 54 percent nationally in 2000. He needs as much or more to win again, and, as long as the Democrats have to prostrate themselves before their own minority constituencies, he has a good chance of getting it.

If the Democrats are smart (and they are—nobody ever called *them* the Stupid Party), they will understand that all the "compassion"; all the denunciations of the Confederate Flag; all the chatter about amnesty; all the affirmative action, welfare, and hate-crime laws will not help if they cannot take more white voters from the Republicans. The real legacy of mass immigration and the overt racial demagoguery that has animated American politics for the last 30 years is a political culture in which the political dynamic of race drives both voting and the campaigns that compete for votes. How that dynamic works itself out next year will determine whether this President Bush will stay in office any longer than the last one. c

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THE REQUEST for an additional $87 billion for our operation in Iraq proves once again that U.S. policy there is anything but conservative. The request includes $5.7 billion for a new electric-power system; $3.7 billion to improve water and sanitation; and $856 million to upgrade and repair three airports, rail lines, and phone service. Other ridiculous expenditures include $100 million for a witness-protection program, $400 million for two prisons at $50,000 a bed, and $360 million for 1,500 police trainers.

The item that is receiving the most criticism is five billion dollars to finance arms and advanced weapons systems for Iraq's army, police, and new civilian-defense corps. Earlier billions have been used to build or rebuild thousands of Iraqi schools, provide free healthcare to many Iraqi citizens, make back payments to the Iraqi military and Iraqi retirees, and even ship 60,000 soccer balls over there.

Our Founding Fathers must be spinning in their graves.

Many lifelong Republicans are beginning to raise serious questions. Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH) told one reporter: "Look at the needs we have here at home with our roads, sewers, and water projects. It's hard to tell people there isn't money for sewers and water and then send that kind of money to Iraq."

Conservatives have never believed in massive foreign aid. Yet our occupation of Iraq has become the largest foreign-aid program in the history of the world.

Conservatives have never believed in huge deficit spending. Yet we are now told that our deficits for just this year and the next will reach an astounding *one trillion dollars*.

Supporters of the war scoffed at the prediction that we would spend $200 to $300 billion in Iraq over the next ten years. Now, by the most cautious estimates, the Iraqi operation will cost $167 billion in just the first two years. Because we are in such a deep fiscal hole already, we will have to borrow all the billions we are spending there.

Conservatives have never believed in world government—government far removed from the people—and have been strong critics of the United Nations. Yet, some prominent war supporters, while criticizing the United Nations in one breath, have said in the next that we had to go to war to enforce all the U.N. resolutions Saddam Hussein had violated.

Most conservatives surely do not believe it is fair to place almost the entire burden of enforcing U.N. resolutions on American taxpayers and the U.S. military. And most conservatives, while believing strongly in national defense, have never believed that the United States should be the policeman of the world. Sen. Robert Taft once wrote: "No foreign policy can be justified except a policy devoted . . . to the protection of the liberty of the American people, with war only as the last resort and only to preserve that liberty."

Almost all conservatives applauded when President George W. Bush, while still a candidate, said we needed a more humble foreign policy and that he was opposed to nation-building. After all, more than 80 percent of House Republicans had opposed the Clinton administration's bombing and military operations in the former Yugoslavia.

Most conservatives believe that we would not have nearly as many foreign enemies if we followed a noninterventionist foreign policy and did not get involved in so many religious, ethnic, and political disputes around the world. Last December, in the *National Journal*, columnist William Schneider wrote: "Throughout the Middle East, anti-Americanism has grown along with U.S. influence. . . . The lesson: Great power breeds great resentment."

Now, we are following a neoconservative foreign policy that is anything but conservative. This interventionist policy is breeding resentment, creating more enemies, putting our children and grandchildren into a financial black hole, and worst of all, killing many young members of our military.

Fortune, in its November 25, 2002, issue—long before the war started—printed an article by Bill Powell entitled "Iraq: We Win. Then What?" Mr. Powell said that a "military victory could turn into a strategic defeat" and that an American occupation would be "prolonged and expensive" and "could turn U.S. troops into sitting ducks for Islamic terrorists." These predictions have turned out to be deadly accurate.

Saddam Hussein is an evil man, but he had a military budget only about two-tenths of one percent of ours and was never any real threat to us. Everyone knew we would win the war quickly and easily. Winning the peace, many of us warned, would be much more difficult.

Now, we are hearing such noble-sounding clichés as "We have to get the job done" and "We must stay the course" and the American people "must be willing to sacrifice." Why? It is clear that the Iraqi people do not want us running their country. They only want our money.

One Iraqi opponent of Hussein who was forced to live outside the country for 30 years wrote to the *Financial Times* in late August: "Replacing a U.S. occupation with a U.N. occupation will only create a different target for the bombers. . . . The root of the violence is that Iraq is occupied by a foreign power. There is no real vision of how that occupation might be transformed into a representative government. Iraqis should be providing their own security."

The official line of war supporters today seems to be to criticize the media for reporting all the killing but failing to emphasize "all the good" that is going on in Iraq. Well, for all the billions we are spending there, I certainly hope there are some good things going on. What they talk about, however, are the schools and the electricity and water and police and other things the Iraqis should be paying for with their massive oil wealth.

A Gallup Poll has found that over half of Iraqis are happy we are there. Of course, they would be happy that any nation is foolish enough to spend hundreds of billions on their country.

Syndicated columnist Georgie Ann Geyer wrote recently: "Critics of the war against Iraq have said since the beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about overseas wars being waged by a minority in their name, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe."

A small minority of very powerful neocons seems to have dreamed of war with Iraq for many years. The neocons got their wish; what they thought would be their crowning achievement, however, may lead to their downfall. So many people in the United States and around the world believe that they were misled about the need to go to war in Iraq and that they

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almost certainly will be much harder to convince the next time around.

No matter who is president, almost all the leaders of the Department of Defense, the State Department, the National Security Council, and our intelligence agencies are going to advocate more and more involvement in foreign affairs, even those that should be none of our business and even when there is no threat to our vital interests. Their power and glory, and, most importantly, their funding are determined in large part by our involvement in the affairs of other nations. They are not seen as men and women of action and world statesmen unless they urge that we do more and more in other countries.

I wish more of our leaders would heed the advice of President Kennedy, who said in 1962: "We must face [the] fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient—that we are only six percent [now four percent] of the world's population—that we cannot impose our will upon the other 94 [now 96] percent of mankind—that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity—and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem."

There is nothing conservative about the U.S. policy in Iraq.

—*Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr.*

CHINA's first manned space mission should serve as a warning that Beijing is serious about becoming a "peer competitor" of the United States. Some commentators mocked the Chinese effort as being far behind the achievements of the U.S. space program. Yet no other country—not even the supposedly more advanced Japan nor any European state—has accomplished this feat. Each has lacked the ambition needed to commit vital resources to such a program.

The U.S. space program has been crippled since the loss of *Columbia* last February. The space shuttles were designed in the 1970's, and *Columbia* first flew in 1981. Her onboard technology had been surpassed by what is available to teenagers in their video-game systems, and her engines and structural features were outdated. The technology now available to China could close the gap in capabilities very quickly. China is considering a manned space station and trips to the moon within the decade.

The last U.S. moon landing was in 1972. The space-station project has moved at a snail's pace because of a general lack of interest in Washington. The stirring visions of giant space stations, commercial shuttle flights, and extensive moon bases in the 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey* have become a sad testimony to three decades of missed opportunities. The United States even decided to "internationalize" the space station in the hope that other, less affluent but perhaps more imaginative states might foot part of the bill. China's new initiative should shake the United States out of her apathy.

China's manned space program is explicitly martial in orientation. Though clearly linked to military space projects, NASA is chartered as a civilian organization, and many have hoped that the exploration of space could be conducted peacefully. There are few such illusions in China. Beijing's manned space program is led by the director of the General Armament Department of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), who also sits on the Central Military Commission of the Chinese Communist Party. Commenting on the flight, the Communist Party newspaper *People's Daily* claimed, "Manned spacecraft can carry out missions of reconnaissance and surveillance better and enable the military to deploy, repair and assemble military satellites that could monitor and direct and control military forces on Earth."

By 2006, China hopes to launch four high-resolution electro-optical satellites and four cloud-penetrating radar satellites, which will allow monitoring of any target on Earth twice daily. China is also investing in an indigenous navigation-satellite program and in the new European Galileo navigation-satellite program. These orbital assets could be used to direct guided ballistic or cruise missiles against mobile targets, such as naval battle groups or rapidly deploying expeditionary forces. While countering U.S. military power is Beijing's top concern, the development of these new capabilities would provide even larger advantages over any of China's potential rivals along the Pacific arc from India to Japan.

Beijing's current minister of defense, Gen. Cao Gangchuan, was once the director of the General Armament Department, having moved to that position from minister of the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND) when the departments were reorganized. He took over COSTIND after a series of satellite-rocket failures, and, since then, every Chinese space launch has been a success. This improvement has largely been the result of the illegal aid given the Chinese missile program by American corporations Hughes Aerospace and Loral, who, along with Lockheed-Martin, have provided Beijing with communications satellites and associated technology. Cao has also been a key link between the PLA and the Russian military-industrial complex, which has sold China an array of advanced weapons and space-related technology in recent years. In these posts, Cao continued the work of his COSTIND predecessor, Gen. Ding Henggao, who expressed the central Chinese view that "world competition is essentially about comprehensive national power, and the key is the competition in science and technology."

The plots that really menace America's future are not being hatched in Afghan caves but in the laboratories and factories, boardrooms and government ministries, of rival major powers such as China. As that competition moves into space, it is not just the geopolitics of the Earth below but the future arc of human civilization that is at stake.

—*William R. Hawkins*

JOURNALIST ANDREW SULLIVAN was discovered in 2001 anonymously soliciting partners on homosexual websites. Thus, it might seem odd that Sullivan, who is HIV-positive, now champions marriage. He has not mainstreamed orthodoxy into his lifestyle, however, but is crusading for "gay marriage," an absurdity that is no laughing matter.

Sullivan's mission is not impossible. While 37 states have passed laws declaring marriage to be between one man and one woman—Alaska's, Hawaii's, Nebraska's, and Nevada's defense-of-marriage acts are state-constitutional amendments—the 13 remaining states that do not have such protections on their books risk being forced by the courts to recognize Vermont's "civil unions" or California's "domestic partnerships." What is surprising about Sullivan's crusade is that he has been given a soapbox in corners of the supposedly conservative press.

After September 11, the former editor of the *New Republic* jumped aboard the War Party bandwagon and was welcomed by neoconservatives and establishment Republicans who prefer the "War on Terror" to the culture war and desire a diverse coalition of the willing. Indeed, his desktop militarism is so hard-

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core that he is often identified as conservative, which shows how far the label has drifted from its moorings.

If Sullivan had not become the macho-macho man of the War Party, he might not be able to insinuate his pet passion into so many media outlets. In October, for example, the *Wall Street Journal*'s "American Conservatism" forum featured a column in which he lectured conservatives to accept homosexual marriage.

"Gay Americans are no longer criminals," he wrote in reference to *Lawrence* v. *Texas*, the Supreme Court ruling that struck down state sodomy laws. (Sodomy, according to Sullivan, is the necessary expression of homosexuality. As he wrote in a recent *New York Times* column condemning a particular Roman Catholic moral doctrine—Sullivan claims to be a Catholic—sodomy provides an "outlet for [homosexuals'] deepest emotional needs.") Because conservatives can no longer regard homosexuals "as some permanent kind of Other"—even Dick Cheney's daughter is a lesbian activist, he notes, as if the status of a politico's problem child should end all debate—it is immoral to deny them marriage licenses. Such "prohibitionism" deprives would-be "spouses" of the blessings enjoyed by married men and women, including that of rearing children.

If our culture were not so lost, it would be unnecessary to defend "traditional" marriage against this perverse variation on an old theme. For, other than differences in the number of wives a man might have, marriage has been a constant throughout history: Outside of the DuPont Circles of the contemporary West, marriage has been universally recognized as the institutional arrangement between members of the opposite sex for the rearing of children. This is so natural and so obvious that only a fool could misapprehend it.

The family has been under assault in the West for some time, especially with the degradation of marriage from an institution affirmed by community and church to just another commercial arrangement administered by the state and subject to no-fault divorce. Assaulting marriage is bad enough; promoting mongrel forms of "marriage" so perverse that no society can long tolerate—let alone accept—them, would only add more ruined lives to the culture war's casualty roster. With any luck, the United States will not have to discover this the hard way.

—*Matthew Rarey*

OBITER DICTA: From Monday, December 15, through Friday, December 19, Wisconsin Public Radio will be featuring readings from *Chronicles* contributor **Anthony Bukoski**'s latest collection of short stories, *Time Between Trains*. WPR's *Chapter A Day* program airs weekdays at 12:30 P.M. and again at 11:00 P.M.

Our poetry this month is provided by **David Middleton**. Dr. Middleton, the poet-in-residence at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana, is poetry editor for the *Classical Outlook* (University of Georgia) and the *Anglican Theological Review*. His books of verse include *The Burning Fields* (1991) and *Beyond the Chandeleurs* (1999), both from LSU Press.

Our interior art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

Our cover art is a reproduction of *St. Augustine at Desk* by Zanobi di Strozzi of Florence, ca. 1470. It has been provided by the Spencer Collection, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

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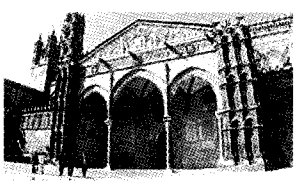

"Sicily—The Good and the Bad of Cultural Diversity."

Some of the world's greatest Greek ruins are not in Greece but on this island, which has been the crossroads of the greatest civilizations of the world. Greeks and Romans clashed here and mingled to the lasting benefit of Western civilization. Conquered by Normans and Arabs, the island has also been the site of cultural experiments designed to destroy Christianity. Not even the combined efforts of Emperor Friedrich, Garibaldi, and Mussolini, however, have destroyed the vibrant Sicilian culture. So take your Lampedusa and Mosca off the shelf, and, if you think Ragu is Sicilian cooking, get ready for a surprise when you dine on a cuisine that can best be described as medieval.

The trip is tentatively scheduled for the second half of May 2004.
For more information contact Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811.

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by Thomas Fleming

Rockford and Gomorrah

American cities rot from the center like an old oak tree: Empty and desolate within, they are kept from dying only by the life that surges just beneath the surface of the peripheral bark. Here in Rockford, the flight to the suburbs is commonly blamed on the aging buildings and the unpleasantness of life in the center. As a result of a natural evolutionary process that overtakes all cities, the far east side is growing, stranding churches and neighborhoods like so many beached whales. It just happens.

Much of what makes Rockford ugly and unpleasant did not just happen, however; it is the result of deliberate decisions made by politicians and the economic interests behind them. Influential men bought property on the east side, and it took little to persuade their friends in government to pay for the roads and sewers that accelerated development. Of course, such expenditures on the periphery absorbed the tax dollars that would otherwise have been used to maintain and improve services at the center. The developers did well, as did their politician friends, though at the expense of the rest of the city.

In this, there is nothing new. Men generally enter upon political careers in order to gain enough power to make themselves worth bribing. What is different in the modern American city is not the neglect of old neighborhoods but their devastation. Old cities such as Charleston and Savannah succeeded in maintaining a few of their ancient neighborhoods, while allowing others to turn into slums. When decent people made the developers realize that charm might be made to pay better than suburban monotony, the cry went up in progressive circles for the restoration of old neighborhoods.

No Midwestern city is a Charleston, where I spent many years of my life, but most of them had neighborhoods worth preserving. Here in Rockford, instead of abandoning the downtown, politicians deliberately destroyed every graceful or decorative building they could put their hands on. The historic courthouse, one of the finest in Illinois, was torn down and replaced by an eyesore that Stalin would have rejected. Dignified commercial buildings were razed to make way for the already crumbling Metro-Centre, a building so ugly that it could only go unnoticed in Podgorica or the suburbs of Bratislava. The beautiful and elegant Carnegie library was built too solidly to tear down, so the progressives were content to strip off the dome and all ornamentation and give it the appearance of a concrete-block public school built in the suburbs *circa* 1960.

Now, when the only decent buildings west of Church Street are old St. Mary's Church and school, the rectory, and the next-door building that houses the Janet Wattles Center, the politicians would like either to raze them or to enclose them within the gigantic criminal-justice mall they are constructing as a monument to their own vanity. When St. Mary's is included within the grim prison complex they are planning, we shall understand the true meaning of the "wall of separation" between Church and state. A stranger from another century, visiting Rockford or Springfield or Peoria, would conclude that the city had been attacked and destroyed by enemies, and that, in the aftermath of the war, there was no money for reconstruction. Unfortunately, the ugliness of Rockford was inflicted by its citizens—if politicians count as citizens.

Many practical reasons have been adduced for the devastation of American cities: the frontiersman's habit of moving on, the American obsession with the new, the pattern of ethnic displacement that turns yesterday's Amberson Addition into tomorrow's ghetto. Some or all of these reasons have undoubtedly contributed to the bleakness and ugliness that prevail in all but the most beautiful of our cities, but, when men willingly abandon the better for the worse, we must not always believe their dollars-and-cents explanations. With all our resources, we Americans have constructed the world we wanted, and, as it turns out, it is not a dream but a nightmare—the realization of Hesiod's dire prediction (made nearly 3,000 years ago) that men would so degenerate that, someday, children would not respect their parents.

The great projects of the 20th century—communism, national socialism, and "secular humanism"—were all gigantic mistakes, and perhaps the most deadly mistakes were made by the Progressives, the proponents of an ideal liberal democracy that would set all people, male and female, free from God; free from the inherited authority of aristocrats, bosses, and fathers; and free, even, from the ethnic and cultural identities that make them who they are. In the Republican version, they would all buy and sell with one another in a global free market; in the Democratic version, they would live together in one great government-sponsored daycare center.

This is the vision that shaped 20th-century America and destroyed our cities. It found concrete political expression in the thousands of political projects spawned by the New Deal and the Great Society, and, now that they have led to results like welfare dependency, illegitimacy, drug addiction, ignorance, and crime, they speak of "unintended consequences," as if they are not the results that everyone ought to have anticipated.

Ignorance is not the answer. If abortion is celebrated in the United States, it is not because women do not know that they are killing their children, but because everything they have been taught to believe about human life and sex and children persuades them that sex and procreation are separable, that every individual has a right to seek personal fulfillment. Abortion and "gay" rights are the inevitable (and inseparable) expression of this point of view.

We do not rear our children, because we do not know what life is all about, and we destroy our cities because we do not know what a city is for. In *The Rock*, T.S. Eliot raised the question directly:

> What life have you if you have not life together?
> There is no life that is not in community,
> And no community not lived in praise of God . . .
> And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads,
> And no man knows or cares who is his neighbor

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Unless his neighbor makes too
much disturbance,
But all dash to and fro in motor
cars,
Familiar with the roads and settled
nowhere.
Nor does the family even move
about together,
But every son would have his motor cycle . . .

Eliot completed *The Rock* in 1934, 11 years before I was born. The world did not begin going to Hell yesterday. It has been a long journey.

I was thinking about some of these things on a drive, last February, from Masada back to Tel Aviv. My friends and I were speaking of the Jewish rebels who made their last stand at Masada and chose suicide over surrender. They were as brave as they were foolish, but some of them, at least, were fighting for their dream: a community lived in praise of God. What a desolate and godawful place to die in. We had driven to Galilee—where Christ grew up—a day or two earlier, and, on the lakeside hills, beautiful in olive groves and fruit orchards, a man might wish to live forever; at Masada, however, suicide might seem a reasonable option. Turning west, I glimpsed a crude wooden sign pointing the way to Sodom. Sodom got blasted 4,000 years ago, and the landscape ever since has been a grim reminder of what happens to those who violate the laws of nature. Inner-city America, occupied by abortion clinics, drug-rehab and mental-treatment facilities, and jails, tells a similar tale to whose who can read it.

There must have been a reason for putting the cities of the plain where they were. The salt-scorched desert of lifeless rock must once have been arable land. The story we learned in school was that towns and cities developed when early man was able to produce and store agricultural surpluses, which he traded for the food and products of other communities. Trade routes developed, and, at the crossroads of such routes, towns sprang up, which the inhabitants eventually fortified and adorned with markets, jails, and temples. It is a plausible enough story, but about as accurate as other social-scientific fictions—like the pretty myth of the social contract.

In fact, the oldest urban sites to be explored—Jericho, Jarmo, and Çatal Hüyük—all appear to have been built before their settlers had reached the stage at which regular trade was practical. Most early cities in Mesopotamia display two prominent features: walls, to keep out enemies and predators, and temples, in which to worship and propitiate the gods. Of course, the walls themselves can serve a supernatural purpose, as they did at Rome, where the *pomerium* (the sacred space enclosed by the walls) excluded predators both natural and supernatural. When Rome became the capital of Christendom, her bishop took on the role of defending the city not only from the barbarians but from the demonic forces that hate civilization.

Ancient towns and cities were, of course, economic centers, as they are today, but they were defined more by their walls and temples than by the bazaar. A visitor to Ur or Erech, or, in later centuries, to Babylon or Nineveh, would have been struck by the sight of the great ziggurats stretching up to the heavens, an expression in brick and stone of the human ache for the celestial powers of the sun, the sky, and the storms.

The history of Greek cities is somewhat more complicated. In the Bronze Age, Mycenaean rulers built vast palaces, which must have functioned somewhat also as towns. These Greek palaces, built probably in imitation of Cretan ones, were usually located on hilltops. After the fall of Troy and the collapse of Mycenaean civilization, most of these palaces were abandoned. The most important exception is Athens, whose inhabitants boasted of being autochthonous, both in the metaphorical sense (they were never conquered) and in the literal sense (their earliest kings were born directly out of the soil of Attica).

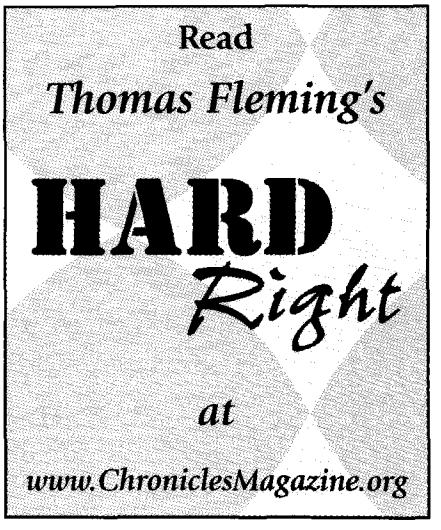
At Athens, as the population spread out onto the plains and the people set up their market in the *agora*, the *acropolis* came more and more to be reserved for temples—not, of course, the great temples of Athena, Erechtheus, and Nike, whose ruins can be seen today, but earlier temples that were destroyed by the Persian invaders, who seized Athens when most of its male citizens had gone off to the ships that mustered at Salamis and sent their families away to places of refuge.

In the classical Athens of the fifth century, the city had two polar identities. The *acropolis* is where Athenians define themselves in relation to the gods, in particular to their city goddess, Athena; in the marketplace (the *agora*), they act as citizens, buying and selling and taking part in the social and political life of the city. (Of course, the *acropolis* was not entirely sacred, and there were temples on the plain, but I am speaking in broad terms.) A successful society is defined by both poles and does not permit the marketplace to be turned into a theocracy of communal values (whether Christian or communist), nor does it turn over the house of God to the money-changers.

In America, though many of our cities began as religious communities, the marketplace has taken over, both in the geographical sense (churches no longer dominate the cityscape) and in the spiritual sense (the values of the market—competition and individualism—have triumphed over the communal values of the Church). Families now consist of individuals claiming rights against one another; homes are places to play with computers, watch our big-screen TV's, and consume purchases that make us think we are living in a TV show. Ray Bradbury saw it coming 50 years ago in *Fahrenheit 451*. Montag horrifies his wife's friends by reading poetry to them and shouts back at one of them,

> Go home and think of your first husband divorced and your second husband killed in a jet and your third husband blowing his brains out, go home and think of the dozen abortions you've had, go home and think of that and your damned Caesarean sections, too, and your children who hate your guts!

The prophecy of Hesiod has been fulfilled. We can buy anything but a human existence, and our virtual cities of virtual houses with people having virtual sex are as lifeless as the plain where Sodom and Gomorrah once stood. c



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North Louisiana Country Church in Flames

—Bienville Parish, the mid 1950s—

by David Middleton

Late Christmas Eve and now long hours begin
For a boy whose mother's welcome hearthside kiss
Closes old tales of no room at the inn
And leads to dreams of lighted trees and this:

A sleep disturbed by strangely glittering gifts
Waiting under the bubble-candled fir,
Then by a wind that through a cracked pane lifts
Curtains the faint smoke-traces lace and stir.

The child in time awakens, sniffs, and peers
Blearily through the window toward a flame
Climbing far steepled timbers till his fears
And eyes fix on a church's gleaming frame.

The rest his roused grandfather, whom he'd tell,
Related hours after when the splash
Of dawn-light drenched the still flickering hell
Where tongues unnumbered babbled in the ash.

Stunned deacons first crushed-in the smoldering doors
Meeting a Red Sea blazing in the nave
Uncrossable to reach those Jordan shores
Beyond the scalded baptistry's raised wave.

Then bearing lists of weddings, births, and deaths,
One dashed by the pastor's study and the choir,
Glimpsing the pulpit Bible's dragon breaths,
Its Book of Revelation laved in fire.

And when, their own breaths shortened, blasts would scorch,
Then burst the baking stained and clear-paned glass,
They'd run the walls and roof-tree, doors, and porch
To light up, blade by blade, dry churchyard grass.

The smoke-choked deacons stumbled out for air
As winds took up the holocaust that spread
Under spiked railings' incandescent glare
To lay its pall of flame upon the dead.

And as those gathered watched each cindered grave
Glowing below a stone's seared name and date,
The church's crackling rafters cracked and gave
In to the great cremation uncreate.

That yuletide night no cows or oxen knelt,
No cocks crowed evil spirits well away,
And no one knew what then a child had felt
Walking those charred foundations Christmas Day.

Yet there by the steeple's melted cross and bell
Clutching his gift, a book of tales, the boy
First saw that world in which each man must dwell,
Aeneas bearing Vesta out of Troy.

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by Roger D. McGrath

California's Mythologized *Bandido*

On the wintry morning of February 20, 1853, more than a hundred Chinese miners were working their claims near Rich Gulch. Without warning, five mounted and gun-brandishing *bandidos* swept down upon the Chinese. Taken by surprise and without arms themselves, the Chinese could do little but comply when ordered to hand over their gold. An American who happened to be in the Chinese camp refused and made a rush for the *bandidos*. He was joined by two Chinese. The *bandidos* opened fire, killing the three men instantly. Stray bullets wounded five others. The *bandidos* collected some $10,000 worth of gold dust and nuggets and left as suddenly as they had come. Two days later, the same gang hit another Chinese camp with equally bloody, if less profitable, results. The robbers killed three Chinese, wounded five more, and got away with $3,000 worth of gold.

Charlie Clarke, the leader of a small posse on the trail of the killers, described them as "five well dressed Mexicans, well armed and mounted on beautiful animals." Their leader was Joaquin Murrieta. Probably the most mythologized figure in California history, Murrieta has been portrayed as a social bandit who waged war against the hated gringos by robbing and killing them. In truth, there was nothing social about his banditry. He robbed and killed those who had money, be they American, Chinese, or Mexican. He killed more Chinese than whites and robbed and murdered several of his fellow Mexicans. His cause was his own.

Most of what people think they know about Murrieta comes from a wildly fictional tale created by John Rollin Ridge. In 1854, the part-Cherokee Ridge published *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit*. Ridge says that Americans drove Murrieta from his claim, flogged him and raped his wife, and hanged his brother. Murrieta then set out on a course of revenge, killing all the gringos responsible. The tale seems inspired more by the removal of the Cherokee and the conflict that occurred both within the Cherokee tribe and with the whites than by anything that Murrieta experienced. (Ridge's grandfather, Cherokee leader Major Ridge, and his father, John Ridge, were both killed during the conflict over removal.) Nonetheless, Ridge's fictional version of Murrieta's life became accepted as fact.

Stories about Murrieta multiplied, and articles mixing fact with fiction appeared in newspapers and magazines for years. The romantic myth was more powerful than the awful truth. Walter Noble Burns took the myth to new heights with the publication of *The Robin Hood of El Dorado* in 1932. Although as long ago as 1949, Joseph Henry Jackson, in *Bad Company*, revealed the fictional nature of most of the literature on Murrieta and demonstrated clearly that most authors relied heavily on Ridge, the early 1970's saw a revival, especially by activist Chicano authors, of the myth of the wronged *Californio* turned social bandit.

Actually, Murrieta was not a *Californio* but a Mexican from Sonora who did not arrive in California until 1849. He was not flogged, his wife was not raped, and his brother was not hanged. Moreover, it was Murrieta's brother-in-law, Claudio Feliz, who first turned to crime, when he stole a large nugget of gold. The theft had nothing to do with racial antagonism. He was panning with a party of American miners at the time and was well liked by the Yankees. Feliz was put in jail for the theft but escaped almost immediately. Within a year, he was leading a gang of *bandidos*, intent on enriching themselves, not on avenging wrongs. A few of those who rode with Feliz were Americans. Feliz led attacks on *ranchos* owned by Americans and *ranchos* owned by Mexicans and on miners and travelers, killing and looting without compunction. By the fall of 1851, Murrieta had joined Feliz and his band. Some months later, Feliz was captured, and leadership of the gang fell to Murrieta. During the early 1850's, Murrieta led the *bandidos* in outbursts of robbery and murder through the San Joaquin Valley, into Southern California, and back to the Mother Lode, killing Americans, Chinese, and Mexicans along the way.

Finally, responding to the depredations of Murrieta and other *bandidos*, the state legislature created the California Rangers, a small force authorized to exist for three months to hunt down evildoers statewide. Harry Love, a rough-hewn, ornery, and fearless 6'2" veteran of the Mexican War, was commissioned captain and put in command. Patrick Edward Connor, an Irish immigrant and captain of volunteers in the Mexican War (and later a brigadier general in the Civil War), was made first lieutenant and second in command. Some 20 men were enlisted as Rangers, most of them war veterans and frontiersmen who had years of experience in tracking and fighting.

The Rangers caught up with Murrieta and his gang at one of their camps on an afternoon in July 1853. The *bandidos* feigned surrender but then, from under their serapes, pulled revolvers and blazed away. A bullet grazed Love's head, neatly parting his hair. Unfazed, he and his Rangers responded in kind. While other *bandidos* were falling dead, Murrieta leaped onto a horse and galloped for his life. A Ranger's bullet broke the animal's leg and sent horse and rider crashing to the earth. Murrieta took off running, but a bullet brought him down. The notorious *bandido* pleaded that he be shot no more and then, in Spanish, said, "I'm dead." Within seconds, he was.

To prove that his Rangers had gotten the right man, Love decapitated Murrieta's corpse and delivered the head to Sacramento. The grisly trophy brought Love a $1,000 reward, a princely sum in the 1850's. Bottled in alcohol, the head was made a touring exhibit in the Mother Lode country. It was later put on display in a San Francisco gun shop and then in a museum, before it was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire.

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Sex in the Suburbs

Adulterous by Design

by E. Michael Jones

At the end of Hollywood's remake of *The Scarlet Letter*, Demi Moore, playing Hester, rides out of town with Dimmesdale to start their new life together as happy adulterers in the Carolinas. They must have been planning to take the Indian version of the Interstate Highway System to get there, because Salem in the 17th century was a very small island of civilization surrounded by a very large sea of forest. The only way to get to the Carolinas or any other place on the East Coast was by boat. The same was true roughly a hundred years later, when Ben Franklin traveled by boat from Boston to New York and then on to Philadelphia.

Hollywood is correct, however, in seeing the forest as a refuge for adulterers; it was also a refuge for every other form of sinful and antisocial behavior at the time. Those, like Huck Finn's Pap, who wished to wallow in the mire of human passion and become, in Huck's words, "all mud," could do so very easily by "lighting out for the territories." By 1848, when Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson was busy trying to turn the world upside down by making the forest good and the city bad; Hawthorne's vision of that forest, however, was essentially the same as that of his Puritan forebears. The forest was the realm of the devil, a fact brought out most clearly in his tale "Young Goodman Brown," where the entire village of Salem meets outside of town to celebrate a combination of a sexual orgy and a witches' Sabbat.

Some things never change. By the end of the 20th century, the forest was still the refuge of adulterers, but, unlike 16th-century Salem, the residents of the town did not have to slink off furtively to the woods to celebrate the Black Sabbath: They lived there already, in antisettlements known as *suburbs*.

In October 1947, the first families began to move into a recently completed housing development on what was once 4,000 acres of potato farm in the town of Hempstead, New York, on Long Island. Hempstead was known as, among other things, the setting for F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. The new development was named Levittown, after the corporation of Levitt and Sons, rather than after some advertising formula based on evocation of the English countryside with an archaic *e* tacked onto the end of the names.

Levittown was a new kind of suburb. It was not connected to a train line, and it was not built with the wealthy in mind. It bespoke the democratization of themes that the wealthy had appropriated in their flight from the increasingly ethnic cities in the period following World War I, when the WASP elite abandoned Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square in favor of the Main Line and Chestnut Hill, both of which were connected to the center of the city by rail lines. While Levittown was, in many ways, another version of worker housing of the sort that the federal government had erected during the war, it was also a hybrid. Now that the war was over, the government could devolve its agencies into private ones that would serve government interests more effectively than central planning, as the debacle in public housing would soon show. The new suburbs were subsidized worker housing for 16 million returning G.I.'s. The success of the war effort had convinced government technocrats that they could engineer man to an extent hitherto unimagined if they could control his environment, and controlling housing, as Louis Wirth and his colleagues knew, was the key to controlling that environment. As Wirth's colleague Robert Merton announced in 1948, six months after Levittown had opened and a few months before Park Forest, Chicago's Levittown, would open, it was time to "change the actual institutional and social conditions." In 1941, Levitt and Sons was able to work out the bugs involved in the mass production of homes, including how to pour hundreds of foundations in a single day, after they received a government grant to build 2,350 war-worker homes in Norfolk, Virginia. William Levitt's stint with the Seabees from 1943 to 1945 allowed him to refine the techniques of mass production in housing. Putting what they learned during the war into practice after it was over, the Levitts built 2,250 homes in suburban Roslyn in 1946. Between when they completed the more expensive homes in Roslyn and when the first tenants moved into the biggest private housing project in American history, the Levitts had done for the house what Henry Ford had done for the automobile, by taking advantage of uniform techniques and materials and the vast economies of scale that they provided.

The Levitts could not have accomplished what they did without massive government support. The main instrument of support for suburban development was the Federal Housing Authority. Created as part of the National Housing Act on June 27, 1934, to protect homeowners from losing their homes when their partially amortized loans had to be renewed during an economic downturn, the FHA soon began to use its financial clout as a tool for social engineering, as Gunnar Myrdal had predicted. "No agency of the United States government," writes Kenneth T. Jackson in *Crabgrass Frontier*, "has had a more pervasive and powerful impact on the American people over the past half-century than the FHA." That influence derived from the sheer bulk of money it loaned—over $119 billion over the next 40 years—as well as the guidelines it imposed on those who took the money. These aspects of FHA policy would largely determine how Americans were going to live for the rest of the century, and they would do so without the heavy-handedness of the urban housing authorities and the violent reaction it provoked. Beefed up by the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the G.I. Bill), the FHA, in combination with the Veteran's Administration, not only provided

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the wherewithal to help the 16 million soldiers returning from World War II buy a home but determined, to a large extent, what kind of home they would buy and where it would be located. "Decentralization is taking place," a senior FHA official told the 1939 convention of the American Institute of Planners. "It is not a policy, it is a reality—and it is [as] impossible for us to change this trend as it is to change the desire of birds to migrate to a more suitable location." Devotees of the Enlightenment always describe their policies as if they were immutable natural processes, because that absolves them of responsibility. The simple fact, however, is that the government created housing patterns through its housing policies just as inexorably as birds hatch from eggs. The government also promoted change through the federal tax code, which encouraged businesses to abandon old buildings by providing greater tax benefits for the construction of new buildings.

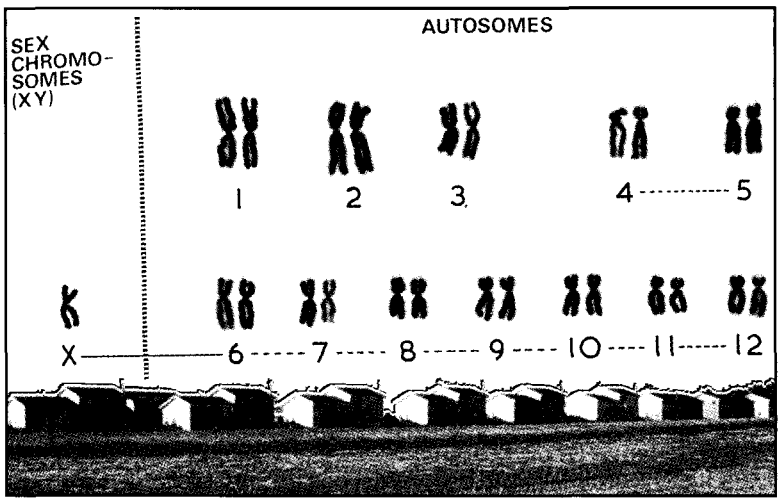
What the years in uniform began, the suburbs completed. The Army had standardized life for millions of men, who returned to civilian life with their ethnic identities weakened (unless they were part of the WASP elite) and their sense of being Americans enforced. The suburbs simply continued this process. Many of the early anecdotes about Levittown and Park Forest mention the ubiquitous mud and the privations as similar to Army life. The returning soldiers were living in a different kind of barracks, but the same interethnic ambiance prevailed in both places. The war had prepared Catholic ethnics to be settled in camps far from their traditional neighborhoods; now, after the war, these same ethnics were being driven into settlements that would complete the job of Americanizing them by "integrating" them into communities with no ethnic character and no local culture other than that created for them by the corporations who built the developments.

In creating the suburbs, the FHA also brought about the demise of city neighborhoods, "by stripping them of much of their middle-class constituency." Being middle class would come to mean living in the suburbs, which was the opposite of lower class, which would come to mean "ethnic" and urban. The purpose of the suburbs was to facilitate the choice of class (in this instance, the middle class) over ethnicity. Early chroniclers of the suburbs noticed this principle in action. In *The Organization Man*, William O. Whyte writes that the new arrivals in Levittown, Pennsylvania, had achieved "emancipation" from "Polish Renaissance" furniture.

Emancipation in the area of housing was another word for *control*. "Ethnics," according to Arnold R. Hirsch in *Making the Second Ghetto*, "sought stability rather than mobility. The trek to the suburbs, for them, would be a forced march made at great sacrifice; it would represent the end rather than the fulfillment of a dream." The fact that many of them made the trek nonetheless shows how powerful the cultural engines driving that change really were.

Gradually, the more perceptive analysts of the postwar suburbs began to see them as instruments of social engineering. In *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford writes that

> The ultimate outcome of the suburb's alienation from the city became visible only in the twentieth century, with the extension of the democratic ideal through the instrumentalities of manifolding and mass production. . . . [A] new kind of community was produced, which caricatured both the historic city and the archetypal suburban refuge: a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age-group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless pre-fabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold, manufactured in the central metropolis. Thus the ultimate effect of the suburban escape in our time is, ironically, a low-grade uniform environment from which escape is impossible.



H. Ward Stevett

Just as the custodians of the first housing projects in Philadelphia would inspect each unit and berate certain tenants for their poor housekeeping skills, the Levitts micromanaged Levittown at the beginning, making sure that residents mowed their lawns properly (fining them if they did not), forbidding fences, and allowing outdoor clothes-drying only on specially designed racks. William J. Levitt openly acknowledged that the housing he constructed was supposed to engineer certain behavior. "No man who owns his own house and lot," he opined in 1948, "can be a Communist. He has too much to do."

Mumford correctly saw that the suburbs were engineered with isolation and alienation in mind. The technology of suburbia all but guaranteed that:

> The end product is an encapsulated life, spent more and more either in a motor car or within the cabin of darkness before a television set: soon, with a little more automation of traffic, mostly in a motor car, traveling even greater distances, under remote control, so that the one-time driver may occupy himself with a television set, having lost even the freedom of the steering wheel. Every part of this life, indeed, will come through official channels and be under supervision. Untouched by human hand at one end: untouched by human spirit at the other.

John Updike, who, along with John Cheever, has come to be known as a chronicler of the suburbs, sees them as an alien intrusion and, ultimately, as a punishment for sin. Updike is both a pornographer and a moralist, roles that do not complement each other. As a result, the significance of the suburbs gets lost in the parallax shift from one point of view to the other. In *Couples*, the suburbs at first encroach upon the long, boozy wife-swapping party that marked the decline of the

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WASP ruling class after World War II; finally, they replace it. Piet Hanema, the transplanted Dutch Calvinist from Western Michigan, is a partner in a construction firm that is building "three new ranch houses on Indian Hill"—what used to be an Indian burial ground. "None of his friends would live in such a home," Piet tells us; that does not matter, however, because, by the time anyone reaches Hanema's state of sexual degradation, nothing matters. As a result, he collaborates with Gallagher, his Irish Catholic partner, who "discretely favored the shoddy" in "this rape of a haven precious to ornamental shy creatures who needed no house." Instead of improving nature, builders like Hanema and Gallagher end up "burying the world God made."

They end up digging their own graves as well. The sexual preoccupations of the tattered remnant of the WASP ruling class allow the town of Tarbox to be taken over by aliens from the suburbs. The troubles began, at least in Updike's view, when "Duty and work yielded as ideals to truth and fun." This happened to the generation born in the 1930's, a generation that was

> introduced as adults into an indulgent economy, into a business atmosphere strangely blended of crisp youthful imagery and underlying depersonalization, of successful small-scale gambles carried out against a background of rampant diversification and the ultimate influence of a government whose taxes and commissions and appetite for armaments set limits everywhere, introduced into a nation whose leadership allowed a toothless moralism to dissemble a certain practiced cunning, into a culture where adolescent passions and homosexual philosophies were not quiet yet triumphant, a climate still furtively hedonist, of a country still too overtly threatened from without to be ruthlessly self-abusive, a climate of time between, of standoff and day-by-day.

Couples is set in 1963, one year before that which *Time* declared the Year of the Pill. The WASP ruling class's penchant for contraception and sexual degeneracy, noticed with consternation by Teddy Roosevelt 50 years earlier, found its culmination and denouement in the birth-control pill. "Welcome to the post-Pill paradise" echoes like some gloomy Wagnerian leitmotif throughout *Couples*. The elite class had become, in the words of Freddy Thorne (Tarbox's abortionist/dentist), "a subversive cell," anti-Christian in its orientation. The wife-swappers of Tarbox were just like the early Christians in the catacombs, Freddy tells us, "Only they were trying to break out of hedonism. We're trying to break back into it."

As with the Pill, their success proved to be their undoing, something Updike sees in spite of his commitment to what he condemns. Just as death is the wages of sin, just as Piet's adultery leads inexorably to abortion and the destruction of their wife-swapping enclave, so the hedonism celebrated by Freddy Thorne leads to the destruction of community:

> Each year there were more commuters, more young families with VW buses and Cezanne prints moving into developments miles distant from the heart of historical Tarbox. Each year, in town meeting, more self-assured young men rose to speak, and silent were the voices dominant when Piet and Angela moved to town—droning Yankee druggists, paranoid clammers, potbellied selectmen ponderously fending off antagonism their fathers had incurred.

The new town moderator is "a rabbit-eared associate professor [of] sociology," who, as "a maestro of parliamentary procedure," gets the town to approve the funding

> of new schools and new highways, sewer bonds and zoning bylaws all . . . greased by federal grants. Each modernization and restriction presented itself as part of the national necessity, the overarching honor of an imperial nation. The last opponents, the phlegmatic penny-pinchers and choleric naysayers who had absurdly blocked the building of this new school for a decade, had died or ceased to attend, leaving the business of the town to be carried forward in an edifice whose glass roof leaked and whose adjustable partitions had ceased to adjust.

Piet Hanema did not approve; what he failed to see was the connection between sprawl and his sins.

Naomi West, writing in the November 1997 issue of *George*, says that "baby boomers are fed up with car-crazy urban sprawl. Boomers want to go home again, to the neighborhoods of their youth. And . . . they really want a politician who will lead them there." West even ascribes a spiritual dimension to the repudiation of suburbia and finds her generation

> longing for local environmentalism, neighbor-wide beauty and identity. Ask any baby boomers about their suburban childhood, and they're likely to tell you that where the Jack in the Box now stands there used to be a field with cows in it. That's an elegy, and an astute politician will speak to that sense of loss.

West pins her hopes on "an astute politician like Bill Clinton," and, once again, design bumps into harsh political realities caused by ignoring more basic moral realities. Can a president who promotes sodomy and abortion lead us back to the urban ideals of the 1920's? Can a cohort of intellectuals who fear returning to the 1950's in sexual matters be serious about restoring the neighborhoods that were predicated on those sexual mores?

In his film *The Ice Storm*, a chronicle of wife-swapping in the suburbs that takes place ten years after Updike's *Couples*, Ang Lee makes a visually compelling point about the *Wohnmaschinen* that huddle like isolated tepees in the bare November woods outside New Canaan, Connecticut. Adultery existed long before sprawl, but homes like this, along with the cars and the isolation they spawn, make adultery more accessible and more feasible. When last I was in New Canaan, the people were talking about Promise Keepers rallies, not wife-swapping. The former is no doubt related to the latter (and a sign of hope as well), because the relationship between design and morals is a two-way street. At the heart of family life is sexuality and its laws, which is to say morality as the guardian of love and the good. If this is so, then no long-term change in the way we live physically can take place without a change in the way we live spiritually. If the New Urbanists want to go back to houses and neighborhoods as they existed in the 1920's, they would do well to look at how the people who lived in those houses viewed family life, marital vows, and the moral law.

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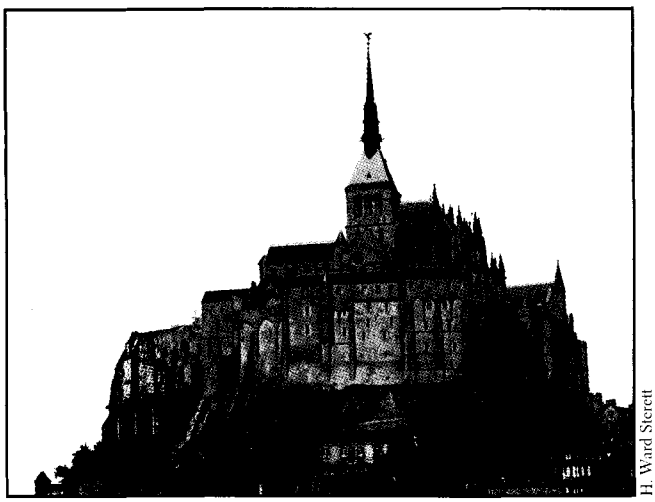
Place and Presence, Holy Hills and Sacred Cities

Angels in the Architecture

by James Patrick



H. Ward Sterett

In classical times, the city was a sacred place, bounded by a wall, in which civilization occurred, and to live outside the city was to be uncivilized. To be the founder of a city was to be god-like, so that there are at least six Alexandrias, the work of Alexander the Great; several Antiochs, named for the Seleucid kings; and Constantinople, the city founded on the Bosporus by the first Christian emperor. Throughout the three millennia that separate us from Knossos and Mycenae, cities have been built for many reasons or for none. Dallas, my hometown, was founded by John Neely Bryan at a crossing of the Trinity River where there were several Indians with whom he could trade. One of the city's boasts is that there is no reason at all for Dallas to be where it is, on no great harbor or navigable inland river, not (in 1841) at the intersection of great highways. Dallas exists not of the will of God but of man, a fact in which the city fathers rejoice. American cities grow up where they do because promoters establish them, because commercial opportunity exists, or because there must be a seat of justice and a repository of records.

There is an older, primordial pattern, however, that dictated that the city be built where the god of the city is worshiped, surrounding and providing context for the house of the god, even as the city's god provides meaning, order, and protection. In pre-Christian culture, the spatial motion was always one of ascent. The pagans whom the prophets denounce built high places. Babel was built around a tower by men who would not accept the lordship of Yahweh but would make a name for themselves, climbing up to heaven to address the gods. Jerusalem is the city of God's peace, and its temple was the place where God dwelt. The God who had journeyed across Sinai with Israel at last had a house on the holy mount.

"It shall come to pass in the latter days," Isaiah wrote, "that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains." To see the Parthenon shine in the morning sun, lifted high over the city named for *parthenos Athena*—the virgin goddess Athena, whose house the Parthenon is—is to understand the power of the goddess. The cause of the city is its god, and the house of the god is lifted high above the *agora*, the ordinary life of the place. Most Greek cities boasted an *acropolis*, a high city in which the gods dwell in a *lemenos*, a walled enclosure cut out of ordinary time and place.

Spatially, the importance of the house of the god is emphasized by its centrality and by its location closer to the heavenly realm of the gods. Rome was built around Tarquin's temple of 509 B.C., dedicated to Jupiter, which stood on the Capitoline Hill; Athens, around the acropolis; Jerusalem, around the Temple Mount. Since the house of the god was the center of the city and the source of its power, to defeat the city, the house of its god must be sacked and destroyed. Thus, in 589 B.C., it was the work of the Babylonians to destroy the temple of Solomon, and, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70, the temple of Herod the Great was razed and its furniture carried in triumphal procession through the streets of Rome. The Parthenon that now crowns Athens was built to replace the building destroyed by the Persians in 490 B.C. The last in the succession of temples of Jupiter crowning Rome's Mons Capitolinus was finally destroyed in A.D. 455 by Gasiseric the Vandal. Thus, with unerring insight, the Muslim terrorists attacked not St. Patrick's Cathedral or Riverside Church but the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the house of our gods, insofar as there exists a common worship in America.

Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome were cities struggling toward heaven and heaven's favor. From the beginning, however, there had been a countervailing movement in the story of Israel. For,

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while the temple was built on a mount, at its center was the tabernacle in which dwelt between the cherubim the presence of the God Who had chosen to be with His people in the tabernacle, leading them across Sinai to a land of milk and honey. Israel lived in the knowledge that they had not chosen Yahweh but that He had chosen them, beginning in the great act of condescension described in Genesis that made God come down into His garden to know us, though we fled. His promise, however, is sure; in Bethlehem, He became one of us in order to bind us to Himself indissolubly. At the end of the age, this world will not ascend, but Christ will come down to claim His throne, and with Him the New Jerusalem will come down out of Heaven from God. Then the great comedy, the story of the happy ending, will be consummated at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb; God's dwelling place will be with men.

> With unerring insight, the Muslim terrorists attacked not St. Patrick's Cathedral or Riverside Church but the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the house of our gods, insofar as there exists a common worship in America.

With the Incarnation, the shape of the city was forever changed. Now God dwelt with man, in ways half-forgotten by moderns. His was a threefold presence: He was present in the bodies of the saints, in the places where His mighty acts had taken place, and finally in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood—that is, the Sacrament of His personal presence. It would perhaps be right to say that, after Constantine, the medieval city had no center; it had a beating heart. St. Peter's grew out of a holy body, taken from the Circus of Nero and buried in a pauper's grave by the red wall. Generation after generation, that body remained the center of Roman Christendom, encased successively and ever more richly by Constantine, Gregory the Great, and Bernini. And this act of building at the body was repeated throughout the West. Churches were built where the holy bodies were, and, if there were no such relics, relics were taken to altars in the place where the church would be built. In the Holy Land, Helena built churches where the Lord's mighty acts had been performed or on any spot where God had appeared—at the place of the Resurrection, at Mamre where the Lord spoke to Abraham. And, most fundamentally, the church was ever the place of God's presence, the place where the God Who had made Himself present in the desert tabernacle made Himself personally present in the golden tabernacles of a thousand churches. As the place wherein Jesus dwelt, the church had an importance that no other building could touch. If you would see the expression of the fulfillment of the heart of medieval Europe, look at Chartres, Amien, Westminster, and at the great monasteries whose ruins still dot the British countryside, at Jedburgh, Fountains, Tintern. After sustenance and armor, these were the product of a great civilization, the houses in which the presence of the Lord dwelt on earth.

The transformation that overtook European religion—and, hence, the European sense of place—in the 16th century can be described in many ways, but one thing is certain. In Northern Europe, the claim that God dwelt with mankind was rejected as idolatry; the presence of Christ was ejected from His throne in the tabernacle; God might be remembered, but He was not present. Churches thus became places not of presence but of preaching. In Protestant Europe, Christ was at last defeated by the prince; shrines were demolished for their value; and palaces were built for the destroyers. In northern Europe, the city had no center save that inherited from the medieval past.

What happened confusedly in Protestant Europe became obvious when the New World (at least North America) broke with the great, half-conscious tradition that made the temple of Christ's presence central. We can see the change in Williamsburg. A long axis connects the college to the capital, passing by the governor's palace and the parish church. In New England, the temples of the various gods lined the village green, offering with a fine egalitarian flair a choice among Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. One would be bold to assay the religion of the place: gods many and lords many.

Perhaps the greatest change of all occurred when the population began to cross the Allegheny Mountains, for then the center of the city became the courthouse, that repository of land records and justice. The house of God is relegated to the periphery, often to the woods. Men come together not to worship Athena or Yahweh but to prosper. The city makes no common, traditionary offerings to any god, although it poses no objection to those who wish to make such sacrifices. But the city has as its heart economic success, the expansion of choice, and power.

Cities—places built in the shadow of divine protection—become places in which man can hide, safe from the pursuing voice of God. In the entire Old Testament, there is only one city that wins God's approval: Jerusalem, the city of God's presence and peace. The saints of the Old Testament are Rechabites who build no walls and plant no vineyards. Indeed, in the biblical story, the time of God's greatest favor was when His people dwelt in the desert, led by Him day and night, dependent on Him.

With unerring insight, Harvey Cox, the now almost forgotten author of *The Secular City*, praised the city for offering anonymity. The city is now a place in which not only God but man may not know us. There is, in fact, no city, no community like Rome or Athens or Jerusalem, bound together by a common worship. In America, the city is not a city but a polity, a set of rational, often praiseworthy rules designed to contain diversity and to make living tolerable when there is no common faith in Athena or Christ. Within the polity, there is a palimpsest, beliefs overlaid upon the city, declaring the worship of some god, but none is the god of the city, for the city is godless; its god is itself.

Yet architecture—the transformations of place rooted in imagination—does not lie. The houses of new gods are omnipresent, those great spires rising to the heavens, on top of which are restaurants, clubs, and bars, commercial success crowned by amusement. And what of that older God? His houses are fallen, becoming places in which seeker-sensitive ministers engage an audience whose paradigmatic activity is entertainment.

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This is not yet universally true among traditional folk, Catholics and evangelicals, among whom sentiment rooted in popular culture still struggles against tradition. The pressure is toward amusement, however. Why might it be that liturgists have as a pressing priority the removal of the tabernacle, that presence of Christ, from the sanctuary to the side chapel? Of course, we know: So that the place may no longer be the house of God but the place of joyful experiences, so that the presence of God will, at last, no longer haunt us. In the Garden, we fled from the Lord, ashamed to see His face in our state of rebellion. Now we would drive Him out, bar the gates against Him, so that we may feel no shame.

The consequence is evident. The absence of common worship means the dissolution of the city, which is now a collection of malls connected by superhighways. Of course, there is an arts mall and a legal-banking mall, but these are species of the genus. Commerce is the natural root of every city, but when the root becomes the crown, the city cannot endure. The prophet had foreseen the day when an omnipotent system of commerce, exclusion from which means death, will define the city. In the end, that city will fall, and, when it falls, bankers, merchants, and shipowners will wail and cast ashes on their heads while the saints rejoice.

Can those who live in the ruins of what was once the shadow of the City of God—a civilization organized, however imperfectly, around the presence of Christ—make it their work once again to make the city an obvious place of God's presence? To ask the question is to know that this is now impossible. Those for whom God is the center of the human enterprise are a chastened minority. The Western world has been a great glory, the home (in Newman's words) of the one great civilization the world has known. But that is over. God may be in our hearts and even in our mouths, but perhaps He will never invest the city as an organizing principle again until He comes in glory.

About A.D. 150, Diognetus the apologist wrote:

> Christians have no obvious peculiarities that mark them off as a separate race, and that devotion to Christ, the Son of God, is the vivifying principle of their association. Christians differ not from other men in country, speech, or customs. . . . They inhabit their native countries but as sojourners . . . they take their part in all burdens as if they were citizens and all suffers as if they were strangers.

As it was in the beginning, so is it now. And be not ashamed of memory. When in Canterbury, amidst the droning crowds, hear the words spoken by Becket as he chose to die for honor of God and the Church. When surrounded by the perfection of King's College Chapel, as the guide points out, always demurely, that this is one of the few places in which the intertwined monograms of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn may be seen, think of the founder, King Henry VI, who, if he was not a saint in this life, almost was. When you see the country church on a hill discovered in the Midwestern flatland, a place of presence like St. Paul's lifted up like the temple of Athena, think of the inexpungeable desire for God that besets the human heart, that formed the city when the world was young.

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California's Triumph of Low Expectations

A Mandate for Whatever

by Steven Greenhut

California conservatives know that the unexpectedly convincing victory of actor Arnold Schwarzenegger in the October 7 recall race cannot possibly result in any serious changes in the governance of this increasingly nutty state, yet most people I talk to are quietly pleased at the turn of events. This is not naiveté but the result of reduced expectations.

Schwarzenegger is an unknown commodity, politically speaking. Occasionally, he makes a valid point, such as when he talks about the state's warped business climate, calls for a reduction in the recently tripled car tax, or demands the repeal of a law that grants driver's licenses to illegal immigrants.

Most of the time, however, he sounds like a standard-issue liberal Republican. He shares a faith in government programs with most Democrats, but he does not want to drive out of state the businesses and entrepreneurs who pay the taxes that fund the programs. His solution to illegal immigration is basically to legalize those who are here illegally. Unlike former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, who failed in his 2002 primary bid to take on Gov. Gray Davis, Schwarzenegger was smart enough not to attack conservatives directly.

The Republican Party apparatus fell in line behind Schwarzenegger, arguing that the real conservative in the race, State Sen. Tom McClintock, didn't have the money or broad-based appeal to win. Besides, Republican elites in California long ago abandoned serious conservatism. They view principled men like McClintock as a threat. They run in horror at the mention of "social issues," an unrelated grab bag of matters ranging from abortion to gun control.

The embrace of Schwarzenegger was a reflection of how difficult it has become for any Republican to win statewide office, as a combination of trendy liberals and new immigrants has given Democrats virtually ironclad control of the state. The only way to break the lock, GOP officials believed, was with a well-known celebrity, no matter how shaky his conservative credentials.

GOP grassroots activists, although they know they have been sold out once again, have pretty much accepted the situation. At the most recent Republican state convention, held two weekends before the recall vote, there was little of the usual animus between business-oriented moderates and socially conservative activists.

The reason is simple: Things have gotten so bad, politically and economically, that most observers had been bracing for yet another exodus of the white middle class. In the late 1990's, 800,000 more Americans left California than moved here. Yet the population kept growing as Third World immigrants, mainly from Latin America, flooded across the border. California is hemorrhaging manufacturing jobs, as those companies that do not flee to China or Indonesia head for Utah or Nevada, where state officials reward rather than punish job creation.

With Democrats controlling every statewide constitutional office and holding just short of a two-thirds majority in both houses of the legislature, the state's middle class had begun to feel like those poor Vietnamese watching the fall of Saigon.

California does not have your garden-variety legislature. These days, bills that used to get laughed at soar out of committee. In recent weeks, Governor Davis signed bills that give men the right to dress like women at work, force most employers to provide healthcare to employees, allow employees to sue their employers for virtually any reason and collect damages, and allow illegal immigrants to get driver's licenses. He did, however, veto a bill that would have granted illegal immigrants free tuition at community colleges.

Meanwhile, the state is $38 billion in the red, and, rather than looking for cuts, legislators have been busy spending even more money. Democrats backed a union measure that would eliminate the main protection remaining for taxpayers—a requirement of a two-thirds majority to pass budgets and raise taxes. Without it, a simple majority of legislators could raise taxes every time they overspend by $40 billion or so.

During the Davis years, police and fire unions gained what is called a "3 percent at 50" retirement plan that allows them to retire at 90 percent of their already bloated pay, which essentially increased their retirement benefits by 50 percent. Indian gaming interests demanded a right to veto development within five miles of any self-declared sacred site. That was finally too much for the legislature, which failed to pass the bill.

As McClintock often pointed out on the campaign trail, if people believe their future is better in the Nevada desert than along the lush California coast, you know things are getting bad in California. At neighborhood parties, people always talk about where they are planning to move.

Liberals in the media depicted frustration with the state's fiscal and political direction as carping by right wingers. However, there are not enough right wingers left in California to recall a governor. Even 25 percent of Democrats and 46 percent of Latinos favored the recall. One Democratic activist I know supported the recall, arguing that there was a need for some check on the power of liberals in Sacramento.

There were lots of reasons to desire change. Democrats decided on a "support Davis" strategy, keeping all viable Democrats off of the replacement ticket. Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante, a dim-witted political lightweight from Fresno who had no chance of winning a Democratic primary, jumped in anyway. His appeal did not expand much beyond the far-left Democratic base, however.

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With his refusal to distinguish between legal immigrants and illegal ones and his ardent defense of his past membership in a Latino racist group, Bustamante frightened the center into Schwarzenegger's bulging arms. He also pushed conservatives, who feared Bustamante far more than they did Davis, into supporting Schwarzenegger.

Though most conservatives preferred McClintock, in the end, they deserted him. McClintock's numbers fell during the last few days before the election, which was, in part, a result of the *Los Angeles Times*' last-minute revelations about Schwarzenegger's alleged groping of 16 women. More than a few conservatives voted for Schwarzenegger purely as a protest against the *Times*.

This was a genuine revolt, despite continued attempts to portray it as an event sponsored by U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, the San Diego County Republican who bankrolled the signature-gathering. Two conservative organizations already were collecting signatures at a decent pace before Issa jumped in. The recall might have taken place in March rather than October, but it moved forward because of genuine disgust with the *status quo*.

That is good news. It shows that, in California, middle-class residents still understand the power they have in the initiative, referendum, and recall processes, adopted in the Progressive era by Republican Gov. Hiram Johnson. The recall was not quite a replay of Proposition 13, which permanently changed state government by limiting property-tax increases. The recall, however, did shake things up in Sacramento.

Despite Schwarzenegger's hiring of aides to former moderate GOP governor Pete Wilson, I doubt that he will suddenly backtrack and raise taxes. Even Wilson now regrets his tax increases. The new governor will not try to reform the system in Sacramento, however, and he has pledged not to cut education funding, which consumes 40 percent of the state's budget.

Schwarzenegger also has pushed for government mandates for hydrogen cars and other weird environmental stuff, and he criticized University of California Regent Ward Connerly's initiative that would have outlawed state-government collection of most racial and ethnic data.

Schwarzenegger's first foray into politics in 2002, promoting an after-school spending program tied to increases in state revenue, demonstrates his big-government priorities. Of course, Schwarzenegger's Proposition 49 is the ideal liberal program: It promises a lot but has not yet spent a dime, since revenues have not increased enough to trigger the plan.

On the night of the recall, the Orange County Republican Party celebration was muted. Few conservatives expect Schwarzenegger to do anything great. Yet there was a palpable sense of relief. I feel the same way. Imagine how the Democrats would be crowing had the recall failed or Bustamante won.

Just having a veto pen in the governor's office is a sea change. Leading Democrats are already toning down their rhetoric in the face of new realities. Attorney General Bill Lockyer, a leftist Democrat from the Bay Area, admitted during a post-recall forum that he had voted for Schwarzenegger. Steve Westly, a liberal dot-com baby who eked out a victory for controller over the underfunded McClintock in 2002, declared that he would support a state spending cap. All of a sudden, everyone is talking about fiscal responsibility. This talk is cheap, but it is better than the previous discussions.

An initiative repealing the bill granting driver's licenses to illegal immigrants is moving forward without vocal opposition, not so much because of Schwarzenegger as of fear of a riled electorate. Some Democratic politicians are openly fearful that Schwarzenegger will go to their districts and appeal directly to the voters.

The election also proved that, even in California, politicians have to make some appeals to the so-called political center. On August 19, Davis delivered a widely televised speech that promised to be an apology for his mishandling of the budget and electricity situations. It was supposed to be his attempt to reconnect with the state's voters. At the time, his approval rating hovered around 22 percent.

Instead of apologizing, however, Davis told viewers that the recall was part of an "ongoing national effort to steal elections Republicans cannot win." The many moderates who had favored the recall effort but who might have been convinced to support Davis again were offended.

Every time Davis got into trouble, he lurched left. In the early days, he had played up his centrist image, imagining future glory as a Democratic presidential candidate. The business community lavished cash on his campaign, understanding that he was the only check on the legislature. When Davis abandoned the center, the public abandoned him.

Bustamante did even worse. In addition to standing behind MEChA, despite its racist slogan ("For the race everything, for those outside the race nothing"), he pushed for eight billion dollars in new taxes. His poll numbers never rose above the low 30's. Even in left-leaning California, one can only go so far. That is not saying much, but for those of us who live here, it is better than selling the house and moving to Nevada. It also explains why Schwarzenegger won by such a large margin, and why conservatives will not complain too much when the new governor betrays them.

Winter Evening

—1867—
after the painting by J.-F. Millet (1814-75)

by David Middleton

A single oil lamp, hanging like a star,
Shines from its pole down on the hooded crib
Whose infant sleeps deeper than night and day.
His face unseen, the husband, with skilled hands,

Weaves reeds into a basket like the one
Near him holding tools—chisels, mallets, awls?—
Employed through winter sabbaths from the work
That binds his sweat and seed to Adam's earth.

Beside his stool his wife sews in a chair,
Mending some plain white garment thread by thread.
Her full pink blouse and gray-green skirt reveal
A body fit to bear a farmer's sons.

What lies outside this Norman Nazareth
The fireside cat that stares at flames recalls:
Snow filling darkness with its cold white glow,
Each flake unique and common in its fall.

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Homeland Security

Defending America First

by Edward A. Olsen

American national security is a fundamental responsibility of the U.S. government. Throughout the history of the United States, from the founding of the republic to the 21st century, Americans have debated the best way to meet this responsibility. For much of that history, the sound advice of President Washington to "steer clear of permanent alliances" and of President Jefferson to avoid "entangling alliances" guided the United States on a path of geopolitical independence that provided a solid foundation for her national security.

In the course of the 20th century, U.S. involvement in global coalitions against common adversaries shifted that emphasis in ways that provoked a long-term debate between liberal internationalists and conservative "isolationists." During World War II and the Cold War, that debate was largely won by Wilsonian and Stimsonian internationalists whose approach to world affairs coopted many conservatives. Nonetheless, principled conservatives remained committed to noninterventionism and advocated U.S. strategic independence.

After the Cold War, that debate was rekindled as a result of conservative opposition to the Clinton administration's multilateralist U.S. commitment to armed humanitarian intervention on behalf of a globalist international community. During the 2000 campaign, candidate George W. Bush appeared to be deeply skeptical of the Clinton brand of interventionism and cynical about the merits of postconflict nation-building. Coupled with candidate Bush's apparent inclinations toward unilateralism, this raised hopes among more traditional and libertarian conservatives that the United States might soon return to her neglected roots.

Since September 11, 2001, those hopes have been abandoned. This raises a crucial question: Why are the self-declared conservatives of the Bush administration, who were hypercritical of the Clinton administration's pursuit of armed humanitarian interventionism, doing essentially the same thing? Despite criticism of the Bush administration's handling of the Kyoto accord and reluctant dealing with the United Nations, the Bush approach to the "War on Terrorism" and the Iraq war has been predicated on international coalitions.

The Iraq war, in particular, underscored the Bush administration's brand of internationalism. As the administration's most steadfast and influential foreign supporter, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, put it in a speech late in the Clinton administration: "We are all internationalists now, whether we like it or not." While the Bush administration's conservative reputation is well known, circumstances have allowed its domestic predilection for "compassionate conservatism" to spill over into its foreign policy in ways that confirm Blair's assertion. Although the ostensible goal of the Iraq war was to achieve regime change in order to preempt Saddam Hussein's ability to use weapons of mass destruction, as the war evolved in ways that demonstrated Iraq did not have WMD's, the Pentagon's label for the war—"Operation Iraqi Freedom"—was transformed from a bureaucratic veneer into geopolitical substance. Supported by wartime polls that indicated almost 70 percent of Americans believed the war was justified because of the horrific evidence portrayed in the media of Saddam Hussein's atrocities against the Iraqi people, the Iraq war became a profound example of armed humanitarian interventionism.

In short, the Bush administration's policies of coalition-based, U.S.-controlled armed humanitarian interventionism are remarkably similar to those of the Clinton administration. The ostensible difference is the context of the "War on Terrorism." Waging war in the name of regime change in Baghdad based on a strategic paradigm of preemptive interventionism that promises to expand that model to other rogue states and centers of terrorism—either by direct action in the form of further wars or as a result of geopolitical intimidation of existing or potential adversaries—amounts to a variation on the Clintonian theme. Applying the Bush brand of compassionate conservatism to U.S. foreign and security policy demonstrates that this form of conservatism is equally committed to the entrenched principles of Wilsonian liberal internationalism and the globalist policy practices of Stimsonian interventionism. Despite the evident differences between the Clinton-era devotion to a U.N.-based vision of a global world order and Bush-era aspirations for a world order imposed by U.S. benevolent hegemonism with its overtones of an American imperium, these two visions for the United States as the sole superpower leading the world are based on essentially the same liberal internationalist commitment to armed humanitarian intervention.

Is the Bush administration's implementation of U.S. foreign and security policy truly conservative? This question centers on the core theme of noninterventionist "neoisolationism" regarding what kinds of wars are truly necessary for U.S. national defense. Do wars predicated on armed humanitarian interventionism qualify as necessary for U.S. national security? In keeping with the "America first" precepts of traditional conservatism, they do *not*. By no means should this be interpreted to mean that the logic behind armed humanitarian interventionism is invalid in principle. There is ample reason for the United Nations or other regional international organizations to create a standing armed force capable of carrying out such missions on behalf of any members of the international community who wish to volunteer for such activities. Individual Americans

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should feel completely free to volunteer for any such organization. Constitutionally, however, that responsibility does not belong to the U.S. Armed Forces.

While most Americans who, for the sake of global stability, advocate a U.S. role in armed humanitarian intervention, understandably do not make their case in terms of a U.S. imperial obligation, others do so—and in a proactive manner. A subset of neoconservative policy pundits openly urges that the United States should perceive her international duties as an imperial mandate that will benefit both the United States and the global community, but most neoconservatives avoid such rhetoric—knowing that their opponents will use it against them. Nonetheless, this perspective does substantially reflect the neoconservative rejection of America-first foreign-policy values and urges extensive military engagement in far-flung corners of the world, with the help of regional deputies, in the name of fostering a *Pax Americana*. An influential early example of this was Eliot Cohen's advocacy of an American "imperial strategy" because "The United States at the end of the twentieth century is a global empire."

Gradually, the policies created by the Bush administration are spawning national debate over the most appropriate approach to U.S. national defense. After September 11, the debate evolved despite President Bush striking a responsive chord with most of the American people thanks to his unpretentious leadership style and authentic emotional rapport. This enabled President Bush to be widely perceived as remarkably effective in the terrorist-induced crisis. Despite the controversy surrounding U.S. policy toward the "Axis of Evil"—especially the logic of waging a war in Iraq and the inconsistencies in U.S. treatment of Iraq and North Korea—popular support for President Bush remains strong. Public frustration with the Iraq occupation could adversely affect that support, however. It remains to be seen whether the American people's desires for authentic homeland security will be fully met by these policies.

Mindful of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Americans today are acutely sensitive to the need for a greater defense of our sovereign territory. The American public's patriotic fervor remains high, motivated by deep-seated fears of additional attacks on U.S. soil. Throughout the decades following World War II, Americans had grown complacent about the seemingly remote dangers posed by external threats to U.S. territory.

That complacency was severely shaken by the ability of terrorists to carry out horrendous destruction without recourse to the sort of military weapons on which the United States has relied. Because of understandable anxieties on the part of the American people, the Bush administration's desires—in conjunction with like-minded congressional leaders—to bolster our homeland defenses warrant support. The efforts to reconfigure an array of U.S. government agencies tasked with various aspects of internal and border security into an overarching Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security generally make a lot of sense, and a very strong case can be made that this should have been done several decades ago.

However, an even stronger case can be made that the ongoing bureaucratic experiment in enhanced homeland security does not go far enough. The new Cabinet department is tasked with myriad responsibilities for domestic security on the federal level that include some coastal- and border-security issues. These involve the functions of the Border Patrol, Coast Guard, Secret Service, transportation security, customs, immigration, emergency services, and antiterrorist technical and scientific capabilities. Other facets of territorial military security are now the responsibility of one command within the Department of Defense—the "Northern Command." This is the first time that this has been done since the United States began her worldwide system of regional unified commands during the Cold War. Despite that move, the lion's share of the Defense Department's missions remains what it was throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War years: the military defenses of other countries' homelands *via* forward-deployed U.S. Armed Forces, rather than the defense of U.S. sovereign territory.

Homeland defense would be far better served were the Department of Defense to be relabeled the "Department of National Defense," with the U.S. Armed Forces primarily tasked with the territorial air, ground, and maritime defense of the United States instead of acting as a global police force. As September 11 demonstrated, those forces were better positioned to defend other countries' military headquarters and urban centers than to defend the Pentagon and New York City. The U.S. military's mandate should be to defend the territorial homeland while retaining the unilateral offensive capabilities—based in the United States—necessary to ensure nuclear and conventional deterrence, to prevent the use of other weapons of mass destruction, and to retaliate decisively against any state or nonstate adversary that dares to test the willpower of U.S. deterrence. If the proposed Department of National Defense were to deal with all facets of U.S. security through more effective use of the four branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps), as well as the Coast Guard, in defending all aspects of U.S. sovereign territory from external attack, then the domestic parameters of defending the homeland should be dealt with by the new composite department—renamed the "Department of Internal Security." This agency should not be organized or conduct its affairs in ways that violate the Reconstruction-era Posse Comitatus Act separating military functions from policing and civil-regulatory functions. Making this adjustment on the homefront would require sound and more conservative modifications of the Bush administration's plans for the evolving agency.

This integration effort would require a significant reappraisal of U.S. national-defense priorities. Does U.S. national defense mean defending the United States, or does it mean defending the entire world? The answer to that question should be obvious; for many Americans, however, the logic of rampant globalism prevents them from admitting that U.S. territorial defense should be the first and predominant mandate of the U.S. government. The U.S. body politic, engulfed as it is in a wave of patriotic ardor to defend the United States from any future attacks, should rally around the core logic of defending America first.

The level of U.S. success in the Iraq war and the desire of the American people to show their support for the U.S. Armed Forces complicated the national debate over U.S. national-security policy. Despite cautionary speculation about the prospective war's nature, it turned out to be a major demonstration of U.S. strategic capabilities and sophistication. Even critics of the war had to acknowledge that it reinforced the message behind the Bush administration's preemption doctrine: to warn adversaries and potential adversaries about the risks of alienating the United States. For obvious reasons, neoconservative advo-

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cates of such an approach felt vindicated, and their clout within the administration was widely acknowledged. The pendulum appeared to be swinging toward the neoconservative brand of liberal internationalism and armed humanitarian interventionism. However, the public's fundamental motive for supporting the war and the troops who put their lives on the line remained centered on the post-September 11 desire to defend the United States against attacks from foreign threats. The reality is that there has been no credible risk that any of the "Axis" states possessed the wherewithal to invade—much less conquer—the United States.

The genuine threat to our national security remains foreign terrorists who are motivated by their perceptions of our roles in their regions of the world and who seek opportunities to strike out at the areas where we are most vulnerable—on U.S. soil. In this regard, a comment made by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld shortly after September 11, as the United States was retaliating rapidly against Taliban supporters of Al Qaeda, was telling: "We're not running out of targets, Afghanistan is." While completely accurate in terms of the air campaign in Operation Enduring Freedom, it also was perversely ironic in terms of the larger U.S. struggle against international terrorists, among whom there always has been, and always will be, a relative paucity of tangible terrorist targets when compared with an overwhelming abundance of vulnerable targets within an open and free society like the United States. This reality underscores the necessity of reordering American national-security priorities.

U.S. citizens should convey to their government that defense of the homeland is best accomplished by keeping U.S. strategic priorities focused on territorial security rather than on preemptive military actions overseas. The United States should pursue an authentic brand of national-security realism and refuse to be led astray by advocates of a flawed "realism" designed to serve the needs of an abstract international community.

Were the United States to pursue this conservative approach, there would be major budgetary advantages that would greatly ease the financial burden of U.S. national defense. The Pentagon's budget request for 2004 is $380 billion, and there is widespread speculation that uncertain costs of the war in Iraq and years of postwar nation-building will boost the overall figures tremendously. Concurrently, the budget request for the fledgling Department of Homeland Security is $36 billion. If the projected funding of other agencies that deal with domestic security is factored in, that figure grows to roughly $41 billion. Many critics from across the political spectrum have raised valid questions about the adequacy of these funding levels for homeland security. Amid the pressures of waging the war in Iraq, Congress passed a war bill supplement for national security authorizing almost $80 billion more. Of that amount, about five billion dollars was allocated to homeland security. These figures are truly daunting, especially if these prospective costs are part of the Bush administration's penchant for deficit spending and willingness to sanction the United States' massive national debt.

Americans need to know how much of the U.S. national-defense budget is actually allocated for territorial defense of the U.S. homeland *versus* expenditures for the defense of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, *etc.* It is virtually impossible to determine such allocations today because of the criteria used within the budget. Advocates of U.S. internationalist commitments do not want to differentiate between U.S. national and international defense costs. Yet there is ample reason to question this reluctance.

Given the population base, economic assets, and strategic incentives of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, each of these areas should provide its own regional multilateral self-defense and should be expected to pay for all of it.

Were the United States sharply to reduce her budgetary commitments to global security, Washington could reallocate a sizable portion of the money to genuine homeland defense by the U.S. Armed Forces and to providing the funds required by first responders at the national, state, and local levels for internal antiterrorist security. It is very likely that the United States could provide such levels of authentic national security for far less than is currently projected. In so doing, Washington would act in a fiscally conservative manner—not exacerbating budgetary deficits and the national debt. We would be far safer while spending far less money.

If American leaders shift course and start crafting policy based on genuine *national*-security priorities, all of the rationales for defending the international community in search of a New World Order led by the United States would be weakened. In time, these rationales will be replaced by a more traditionally conservative understanding of the United States' proper role in international affairs. To get to that stage, Americans who support that option will need to persist in a vigorous national debate, exposing the flaws in existing policies and explaining the virtues of a truly conservative approach to U.S. national security in a manner that can draw upon a broad spectrum of society. Neoconservative hawks bent on establishing U.S. dominance in a globalized security system are not "conservatives" in the traditional sense of the word. On the contrary, being hawkish in pursuit of genuine U.S. *national* security and the deglobalization of American homeland defense constitutes authentic conservatism. ◁C▷

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Sociology of the Gods

by Massimo Introvigne

"The eternal gods do not lightly change their minds."
—Homer, *Odyssey*

For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery
by Rodney Stark
Princeton: Princeton University Press; 488 pp., $35.00

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Rodney Stark is considered by many to be the greatest living sociologist of religion. Generations of English-speaking students have used his textbook *Sociology*, now in its eighth edition. Stark was one of the founders of the theory of religious economy, which replaced the earlier theory of secularization as the sociological model for interpreting the status of religion in the West; for several years, however, he has devoted his efforts to a sociological interpretation of the history of religions.

His essay on the origins of Christianity, "The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History" (1996), was translated into 12 languages and has been given a surprisingly favorable reception by experts in ancient Christianity, though he cast doubt on more than one of their interpretations. With *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (2001), Stark embarked upon a full investigation of monotheism, putting to the test the hypothesis that regards the general principles of religious economy as valid not only for the contemporary world but for the ancient and medieval periods. This theory postulates, among other things, that the "demand" for religion tends to remain constant over time, so that the variations in the ratio of religiosity—that is, in the percentage of persons who say that they are religious or practicing religion—depend on the quality and quantity of the religion available. Unless the religious market is distorted by coercive interventions of the state, it behaves like other markets: Monopoly, as time goes by, produces indolence and a lack of enthusiasm among the monopolists and depresses the market, which subsequently is revived and reinvigorated by active and bracing competition.

Jacques Callot

The most typical comparative case on which the theory of religious economy has been based is the contrast between the monopoly held by the state churches of Scandinavia, which have reduced the number of practicing Christians to a minimum, and the vigorous competition among Christian denominations in America, which has transformed the United States into a country where the number of practicing Christians is three-times higher than the average within the European Union. This result, Stark declares, holds also for antiquity. The success of religions protected by the state against competitors was, at first, brilliant; yet, in the long run, triumph proved ephemeral, after the official clergy grew lazy and lost missionary zeal. Another aspect of the theory of religious economy holds that monotheism, postulating a personal god, has a greater success than polytheistic religions as well as those that venerate an abstract "essence" unconcerned with the problems of human beings. A unique god who takes care of every aspect of human life is infinitely more attractive.

Naturally, Stark approaches these problems from the sociological point of view, which, on principle, excludes value judgments concerning which theology is "true." Yet his perspective is far from indifferent to questions of theology and doctrine since, for him, the doctrinal aspects help to explain why one religion is successful and another disappears.

Although monotheism, by its nature, has difficulty coexisting with other faiths, Stark emphasizes that, in practice, this intolerance is expressed in violent acts only when an external threat makes a reaffirmation of identity seem necessary. Thus, the face-off between Christianity and Islam determines for each a harsher repression of both Jews and heretics.

For the Glory of God, the second volume of Stark's study of monotheism, examines four episodes in the history of Western Christianity: medieval here-

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Massimo Introvigne is the founder of the Center for the Study on New Religions (CESNUR). This article is an abbreviated translation of a review that appeared in the May-June issue of Cristianità.

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sies and the Reformation, the birth of science, witch hunts, and slavery. Stark says he expected to find the usual materialist and Marxist bias in the historical literature, but

> what I was not prepared for was how many of the historians I read . . . expressed militant anti-Catholicism, and how few of their peers have taken exception to the litany of contemptuous, anti-Catholic comments, delivered without any trace of self-consciousness.

Stark adds, "I am not and have never been a Roman Catholic"; and, indeed, some of his conclusions contradict the formal teachings of the Church—*e.g.*, that the Church of England has a valid apostolic succession. Yet, in examining the historical literature as a sociological interpreter, Stark encounters the obstacle of anti-Catholic prejudice—often extreme—among ancient and modern historians.

The first part of his work, "God's *Truth*," takes up the story of Christian heresies, from Montanism to the Protestant Reformation. Stark uses these examples to return to a central element of his theory: A monopoly protected by the state generates a lazy clergy that loses its missionary zeal. From this perspective, the event that others regard as the miracle of Constantine is equally the "curse of Constantine." With Christianity guaranteed by the state, Christian zeal, little by little, grows weak.

The theory of religious economy postulates that a central monopoly, when it has grown lazy, generates forms of dissent on the periphery. These include, on the one hand, the various medieval heresies and, on the other, the reform movements that the Catholic Church manages to keep within the fold. This is not a small matter: a manifestation of what Stark calls the Church of Piety, represented primarily by monks and religious orders and often critical in its dealings with the Church of Power, which exhibits not only a lack of missionary zeal but immorality, simony, and intrigues.

Stark resolutely rejects the Marxist theory that treats both the Church of Piety and the heresies as primitive manifestations of social protest. Ascetic and heretical movements, in the overwhelming majority of cases, are led not by the Church of Power but by the rich, while the nobility furnished the Church with the greatest number of ascetic saints in the Middle Ages. Some Marxist arguments, he points out, are simply ridiculous, such as Engels' description of the Waldensian movement as the reaction of "patriarchal Alpine shepherds against the feudalism that was advancing toward them"—which ignores completely the reality that the Waldensians were born in big cities, led by burghers, and, to escape persecution, took refuge in the Alps only two centuries later, when feudalism was already in crisis.

Stark argues that heresy tends to be tolerated during periods of relative stability and is persecuted usually when Christianity confronts external threats, principally from Islam. Despite the attempts to repress it, the Church of Piety ultimately won at the Council of Trent, and both Catholic and Protestant reform became entrenched in large portions of Europe.

Sociological theory, Stark notes, must explain why Protestantism succeeded in some parts of Europe and not in others. The answer he proposes is that, apart from the interests of sovereigns and the type of government, the decisive factor is the absence of a popular Catholic opposition to Protestantism. Such opposition was proportionally stronger the earlier and more deeply a geographical area had been Christianized. Thus, in Scandinavia, which was Christianized relatively late and more or less superficially, Catholics mounted very little opposition when their kings opted for Protestantism. In Mediterranean Europe, by contrast, Protestantization was opposed, often in arms, by a vigorous popular Catholicism.

The second part of Stark's book, "God's *Handiwork*," is dedicated to the birth of modern science. Science is born, Stark notes, as a result of several interrelated causes tied, in part, to economic factors and technological development. These causes are necessary, but they are not sufficient. Modern science came into being only under specific religious conditions: Only a culture convinced that the world has been created by a personal god, benevolent and not capricious and whose laws therefore are immutable, will be impelled to try to discover those laws. Thus, notwithstanding advanced technology, science was not born in China, which lacked the notion of a personal god, and was extinguished in the Islamic world when the prevalent theology began to teach that God is unpredictable and does not operate through constant laws.

Naturally, the idea that Christianity generated modern science is diametrically opposed to the received wisdom that science emerged after a long struggle to free itself from religious shackles. This view is, according to Stark, a complete myth and derives from anti-Catholic prejudice. Already in the so-called Dark Ages, "Europe's technology advanced far beyond anything achieved by the ancients."

Contemporary historians of science, giving the lie to the black legend that Christianity struggled against science, have shown that the majority of medieval Christian philosophers argued that the world was round, not flat; that anatomical studies progressed through the dissection of human cadavers, which, with certain restrictions, was permitted by the Church; that the heliocentric hypothesis had been formulated without dissension from Christianity well before Copernicus; and that Galileo, far from being "an innocent victim" of the abuse of power, "thoughtlessly placed the whole scientific enterprise itself in jeopardy" by presenting his scientific theories as certainties, instead of as hypotheses, and then deducing theological consequences from them. Equally false is the idea that the great scientists in the formative period of modern science were principally skeptical free thinkers, or, at least, anti-Catholic Protestants. Stark constructs a table that includes 52 scientists, all active in the scientific Golden Age (1543-1680), whose biographies appear in various encyclopedias of science. The tally is 25 Catholics, 25 Protestants, and only two free thinkers.

Stark also confronts the objection that the Church, or at least fundamentalists, have struggled against the theory of evolution. Examining the image of the Scopes Trial (1925) found in literature and film, Stark points out that the evolutionists were using the trial to test the laws that hindered the teaching of evolutionism. In fact, the relations between Christian denominations and evolutionist theories are far more complex. Such theories were originally received with benevolent neutrality by Christian denominations, which reacted only when evolutionism was used to promote atheism and socialism: "The earliest and most militant proponents of Darwinism made up a virtual Who's Who of socialism." On the other

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hand, Stark observes with a certain coolness that problems related to Darwinism have not been resolved after 150 years.

Despite the difficulties in the theory, Darwinist militants such as Richard Dawkins write sentences like "It is absolutely safe to say that, if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane." Such sentences are very interesting to a sociologist, because they display a fundamentalist attitude that cannot substitute for scientific proof. Stark notes that several colleagues warned him that to criticize evolutionism would damage his career, adding, "This only hardened my resolve to suffer no more this arrogant occultism."

In the third part of his work, "God's *Enemies*," Stark takes up the subject of witch hunts. He considers insufficient the usual explanations offered for them: the theory that the Church was persecuting an underground paganism that She called witchcraft; the theory that the accused were mentally ill (though many defended themselves with an ability inconsistent with madness); the feminist theory of "gynocide," which points the finger at a male-dominated and patriarchal culture while ignoring the fact that many of the condemned witches were men, whose punishments were more severe than those meted out to women; the theory that accusations of witchcraft were a means of getting hold of the property of the condemned (who were, in fact, often very poor); and the presumed fanaticism of the clergy, who commonly attempted to thwart the anti-witch campaigns. Stark's understanding of witch hunts is that they were produced by the diffusion of magical practices that were interpreted as sinister by the prevailing theology; by religious conflict that made the toleration of dissent more difficult; and by the failure of a weak central authority to prevent the persecution of witches.

The fourth part of Stark's work, "God's *Justice*," takes up the subject of slavery, another field dominated by anti-Catholic propaganda. Slavery, Stark observes, is an almost universal historical phenomenon, known to exist in its most brutal forms even in such cultures as Greece and Rome, unanimously admired for their high level of civilization, as well as in those (the Amerindians, for instance) admired for their supposed idyllic rapport with nature. Only a few small communities in the ancient Semitic world found reasons for opposing slavery, and only Christianity abolished it, though pockets remained for many years in the frontier regions most distant from the Christian center.

With the conquest of the New World, the colonial powers, after trying with scant success to enslave the local Indians, began to acquire slaves from African Muslim merchants and to import them into the Americas. The pontifical reaction was very harsh. Pope Paul III declared Satan to be the inventor of slavery and absolutely forbade it in every form. The papal condemnations were regularly reiterated, if only to complain that they were not observed. Eventually, the continuous pressure of the Holy See led to the promulgation of 18th-century legal codes, such as the French Code Noir and the Código Negro Espanol, regulating the treatment of slaves.

Just as the claim that the Church favored slavery is false, so also the claim that it was the illuminists who worked for slavery's abolition. The cream of the Enlightenment intellectuals—Locke, Voltaire, Hume, and Diderot—fully accepted slavery, and many of them even invested in the slave trade. It was, in fact, the authority of the Catholic Church, together with a powerful Protestant movement begun by the Quakers, which caused the triumph of the abolitionist movement throughout the Christian world (but not the Muslim one, where slavery is still practiced to this day). The Marxist notion that the religious argument for abolitionism represented a limited economic interest in the institution of slavery is based on the calculations of Adam Smith—who is, paradoxically, the *bête noire* of the Marxists. On the contrary, Stark argues, slavery did not die of its own inefficiency, nor was abolitionism a capitalist plot. The abolition of slavery was simply one of those "extraordinary episodes of faith that have shaped Western civilization."

Stark appends a methodological discussion that goes beyond the ideas of Durkheim, who restricted the sociology of religion to questions of ritual and of support of the moral order. In reality, the social consequences of each religion and its influence on history depend on the type of god or gods that are worshiped. The Christian religion, and the Catholic Church in particular, have certainly been involved in tragic and questionable episodes. But they have also written some of the most luminous pages in the history of the West. ⊂

BRIEF MENTION

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury (New York: Simon & Schuster; 190 pp., $23.00)

This 50th-anniversary reissue of Ray Bradbury's novel includes a new Introduction by the author. It is one of the few popular American novels that has endured, and deservedly so. Bradbury knew that good books help us to become more human, more humane; and nothing could be clearer than the antithesis between the fireman, who has started to read and think, and his wife, who pops pills and watches television on her wall-size screen.

Ten years ago, on the 40th anniversary of *Fahrenheit 451*, we published a retrospective article by Paul Trout, who called upon English professors and others to confront the book's "offensive and prescient message: that freedom will be incinerated in the name of happiness and sensitivity and that we ourselves will direct the flame." Ray Bradbury was kind enough to comment, in the same issue, on Trout's article, describing it as "the most outrageous piece of logrolling you have laid eyes on in a generation."

In speaking of his prophetic novel, Bradbury told *Chronicles* readers: "Today there is no fear of book-burners, only nonteachers and nonreaders, which means no need of books and so no burning." For the foreseeable future, we shall continue to have libraries filled with books, though our own Rockford Public Library has been jettisoning thousands, many of them literary classics. One day last week, I purchased Mario Praz's study of neoclassicism, a complete set of Corneille, and an academic book on the medieval economy. These are not duplicate volumes; the library pitched them to make room for more videos, more on the occult, more pulp fiction. Who needs book-burners when we have librarians?

—*Thomas Fleming*

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Naked in the Public Square

by Fr. Michael P. Orsi

Religion Returns to the Public Square: Faith and Policy in America
edited by Hugh Heclo and Wilfred M. McClay
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; 359 pp., $22.50

Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teaching of the Lutheran Reformation
by John Witte, Jr.
New York: Cambridge University Press; 303 pp., $23.00

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The recent battle over the removal of a 5,280-pound monument to the Ten Commandments placed in the lobby of the Alabama Supreme Court by Chief Justice Roy Moore has deep religious and civil roots stemming from the Protestant Reformation and provides an excellent historical study of religion, law, and public policy in America.

Two recent works contextualize Chief Justice Moore's position, as well as other hot-button cultural issues such as education vouchers, charitable choice, and family law. *Religion Returns to the Public Square: Faith and Policy in America* is a collection of essays that explains how religion has historically interacted with American politics in the formation of public policy; *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teaching of the Lutheran Reformation* explores the effects of Martin Luther's theory of two kingdoms, one sacred and the other secular. Both volumes confirm the existence of a Protestant ethos in America that once called on civil officials to promote religion as part and parcel of their sharing in the common priesthood of all Christians. This ethos survived intact at least until the middle of the 20th century. Chief Justice Moore and his supporters represent a vestige of the original American understanding, before separation of Church and state came to be regarded as an impregnable wall.

The secularism that now seeks hegemony in American law and public policy owes nothing to the vision of Luther or to that of our Founding Fathers, who presumed that men of religion would assume responsibility for infusing God's laws into the national culture through jurisprudence and legislation and expected these to shape civic life through the country's public institutions and private organizations. Luther envisioned three sources of secular authority: family, Church, and state working in consort to enforce the natural law and thereby aid their earthly charges to live a devout life. This was to be done by instruction in the moral law as found in the Ten Commandments and in the teachings of Christ. Clergy would instruct magistrates, teachers, and parents in God's law; marriage laws, schools, and courts would provide the conscience and structure for a Christian society. Although Luther believed good works play no role in the drama of salvation, he considered divine law to be useful in the earthly kingdom as a means of restraining sin and driving sinners to repentance—especially through criminal law, which corresponds to the theological use of retribution and the educational use of punishment and whose application requires the judge to rely on prayer, meditation, and the reading of Scripture. (In fact, the obligation to maintain Christian equity, Witte tells us, required German judges to be schooled in both the law and theology.)

In *Religion Returns to the Public Square*, Charles Reid, Jr.'s essay, "The Religious Conscience and the State in U.S. Constitutional Law 1789-2001," demonstrates clearly that, for at least the first 150 years of the nation's history, public religion was taken for granted by public officials and that only in the latter part of the 20th century has the country moved rapidly toward the realization of a secular state. Reid also examines recent case law regarding the Establishment Clause and perceived infringements on religious liberty, explaining some of the different philosophical and theological traditions in America that have competed against the evangelical Protestant model.

Chief Justice Moore was elected by the people of Alabama because he had a reputation for defending God and the Ten Commandments in his public duties as a circuit-court judge. This idea, along with a recent *USA Today* poll that indicates that 77 percent of Americans believe the monument should stay, suggests that evangelical theology remains a strong influence on American culture and thus continues to be an important ingredient in American politics. In support of this insight, Wilson Carey McWilliams, in "American Democracy and the Politics of Faith," describes how religion has historically been deemed necessary to promoting moral values in society and regarded as essential for maintaining republican government. Indeed, religion and religious imagery have been effectively used by American politicians both to get themselves elected and to promote their legislative agendas by framing them in moral terms. Thus, we have had—and continue to have—defenders of prayer in the public schools, of the phrase "under God" included in the Pledge of Allegiance, and of the underlying religious concerns pertaining to family law, the most recent issue being same-sex marriage. D.G. Hart's essay, "Mainstream Protestantism, Conservative Religion and Civil Society," will help the reader to see evangelical Protestantism's stand on these contemporary issues *vis-à-vis* the old mainline churches' more liberal theology and social agendas.

Witte's book is an excellent dissertation on how law in early modern Germany coalesced with Roman law and the Code of Canon Law under the influence of Lutheran scriptural interpretation and how, in time, this aided the emergence of the secular state. Witte shows that, by removing the hierarchical priesthood and the sacramental hegemony of the Catholic Church, Luther was able to place power in the hands of civil magistrates. Obviously, the question never faced by the Reformers was *What if the civil magistrates were* not *persons of faith*? This Protestant reliance on the faith of individual believers effectively began the breakdown of Christian civilization in the West, by allowing privatized disbelief to enable secularists to remove God from public discourse. (Note how mention of Christianity is absent from the constitution of the European Union.)

In the end, Luther's program for a renewal of faith in society has proved to be self-defeating. Still, many American Catholics today are as adamant as any mainline Protestant or secularist in the belief that faith should play no role in government and politics. For these people, Catholicism seems to be just another Protestant denomination in the United States. So far as this is the case, perhaps we can say that Luther won his contemplated victory.

Fr. Michael P. Orsi is a research fellow in law and religion at Ave Maria School of Law in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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Local Devolutions

by Molly Fleming

Rockford: 1900-World War I
by Eric A. Johnson
Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia;
128 pp., $19.99

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Most Rockfordians are familiar with the garishly modern Winnebago County Courthouse at 400 West Main Street, which is easily recognized by its filthy cement exterior and offensive "contemporary" style. It was not that much better at the turn of the 20th century, as far as I knew, until I received a copy of Eric A. Johnson's *Rockford: 1900-World War I*. A pictorial history, the book displays what Rockford was before developers ruined some of her most prized landmarks, theaters, and public houses. (Among our most impressive buildings was the old court house, designed by Henry L. Gay in French-Venetian-American style between 1876 and 1878.)

Although it is not the angle Johnson himself took when compiling the postcards and writing the bylines, what Rockford locals once had was a beautiful and classic downtown with elegant residential neighborhoods to match—and now most of that is gone. Although the renovation of the Coronado Theater, the grandeur of Memorial Hall, and great preservation work done by various companies are all things that locals should be proud of, *Rockford: 1900-World War I* displays an entirely different city. The book offers 128 pages of beautifully preserved postcards that do not read "Just Saying Hi From Rockford, Ill." and are accompanied by informative descriptions that help the reader to identify modern neighborhoods and how they looked in the city's heyday. One of the most striking contrasts is presented by the old Rockford College campus, which was once host to predominantly Romanesque architecture and graced by the elegant Colonial-style Middle Hall, built in 1852. Today, the college (which was moved to a new campus in the early 1960's) looks rather like a collection of ill-shaped cardboard boxes.

Additional eye-openers are the scenes of a bustling community at the Shumway Market, back in 1915. One postcard, donated by Midway Village and Museum Center, portrays hundreds of people shopping and perusing the marketplace on a sunny afternoon. Today, the weekend farmers' markets offer nothing like the scenes in this book. As Johnson pointed out to me in an interview, however, the times have changed. "Most circumstances are beyond our control. Life has changed and Rockford culture has changed." Nevertheless, the author (an Ohio resident) appeared to be fairly positive about the city and its growth. "I'm not a native to Rockford," he said. "My wife is the one who introduced me to [the city]. I have brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and friends there. I became acquainted with Rockford through my wife. It's where I came of age, and it was an exciting time in my life. I think I appreciated things that the average Rockfordian overlooks day-in, day-out. [The book is] my love-gift to the Rockford community." Perhaps it takes a nonnative to step back and see the city through new eyes and to show the community the stark contrast between past grandeur and present disarray.

Rockford: 1900-World War I is a great addition to the few but important books published about Rockford. When I asked him why he chose to do a pictorial history, Johnson commented, "Written histories have been done. A lot more comprehensive histories have been done. These postcards are very beautiful and, to use a cliché, a picture is worth a thousand words. I tried to tell the interesting tidbits with these scenes that strike me as the average person's view of the important people, institutions, and public areas."

And so his book is a must-have for any local enthusiast. The most interesting cards are those that have messages etched across them, giving the reader insight into communications by Rockford's locals almost a hundred years ago. In the chapter "Three Cheers for Rockford High School," there is a photo of the football team with an arrow drawn to point at a sullen looking youth and the words "This is me. Ha! Ha!" Although the humor by George "Kitty" Kitteringham is completely lost on me (though his scrawny and rather hen-pecked appearance *is* amusing), the handwriting adds a comforting dimension.

There is also interesting information about Camp Grant, the old Harlem Park, Theodore Roosevelt's visit to Rockford, and the theaters that hosted the likes of Oscar Wilde, Sammy Davis, Jr., Bob Hope, and Susan B. Anthony. Now Rockford pulls in Cher and Kenny Chesney, with Weird Al Yankovic as the closest thing to a vaudeville show. I could have lived a happy life without ever seeing Susan B. or Sammy, but these people were once "stars" who provided the city with a connection to the outside world. This past spring, Aretha Franklin was slated to play at the recently renovated Coronado Theater but turned the gig down, citing the elegant new (if not a little over the top) venue as "a dump." Seventy-five years ago, she would have jumped at the chance to play the same city that had been graced by so many popular figures in the cultural world.

Johnson's book should be enlightening to the locals of all the other overdeveloped, undermanaged cities in America.

Molly Fleming is a staff writer for the Rock River Times *in Rockford, Illinois.*

From Cincinnatus to Caesar

by J.O. Tate

From Union to Empire: Essays in the Jeffersonian Tradition
by Clyde N. Wilson
Columbia, SC: The Foundation for American Education; 343 pp., $24.95

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Dr. Clyde Wilson's new gathering will be of particular interest to readers of this journal, as some parts of it have appeared in these pages and as he has for years maintained a special relationship with *Chronicles*. Yet I hasten to add that the compelling quality of these essays speaks broadly to the most vital issues of our national identity and history and to the self-understanding of Americans as expressed in our politics—and, even more, to the self-awareness of Americans that cannot, or should not, be expressed in politics.

Written from 1969 to 2001, these articles, essays, reviews, and lesser pieces express a consistent, surprising, and productive point of view. They are consistent not only in the continuity of the author's identity but, more importantly, in his speaking from principle; surprising in their applicability to the contemporary era. And they are productive because, no matter the provocation, Wilson's counsels are not of despair. Clyde Wilson

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knows too well that optimism and pessimism, though not determinative, are in some way self-fulfilling prophecies. That "Death by Melancholy" once identified by Walter Sullivan, the pessimism that is rooted in the blessing and curse of knowledge, can only be averted finally by the maintenance of faith, however distressed such faith may be. Wilson keeps the faith, no matter what.

The base of Clyde Wilson's knowledge (though by no means its limit) is as an historian and an Americanist; his center is the South. A professor of history at the University of South Carolina, he is the editor of the 28-volume edition of *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, as well as the editor and author of other books. He has for more than three decades articulated a perspective that, though unique, is not unrelated to those of such notables as Richard M. Weaver, James Burnham, Russell Kirk, M.E. Bradford, Forrest McDonald, and Samuel Francis, who are subjects of various of his pieces.

The point of view that Wilson upholds with informed knowledge and articulated reason is the one he identifies as Jeffersonian and we may call localist, particularist, democratic, and republican. His point is made when we understand that the term *federalism* has come to mean the opposite of its historical denotation and that *democrat* and *republican* signify something more—and other—than the names, respectively, of self-serving factional elites; or more and other than euphemisms for pandering demagogues, on the one hand, or pandering plutocrats, on the other. Alternatively, we might say that his point is made when we begin to understand the Constitution and our relation to it, and how it has become the arcane totem of various witch doctors, such as those on the Supreme Court who recently found constitutional sanction for affirmative action and sodomy. Interpretation of the Constitution has become so uncannily attuned to the whining of identity groups that it is no wonder that nominations to the Supreme Court have been grossly politicized. But that is just the point: The mystification of the Constitution has been a necessary part of our slide into abstract politics for a long time. Yet if we as citizens or as subjects cannot even read our own Constitution, that has not deterred Clyde Wilson from engaging it on its own grounds.

Having been instructed for years in the national journals and the better newspapers that ours is "a proposition nation," we might be shocked (if we did not know better) to discover that it is no such thing. And the reiteration of other suppressed truths might be shocking as well. My favorite passage is this one:

> It would astound our politicians today to learn that at the time of the Founders and even long after, people held public office for the honor and that in most cases, rather than filling their own snouts at the public trough . . . they actually made a sacrifice of their private interests to serve in public office. The Constitution presupposed an aristocratic rather than a bourgeois class of office holders and aspirants . . . who would always be capable of independent judgment. That is, the operation of the Constitution rested in part on something that has ceased to exist.

Yet this does not necessarily mean that the Constitution can never again rest on a class of independent minds uncorrupted by bribery and unclouded by ideological obsession. To achieve such a deliverance from the present thralldom, Americans must return to electing to office Jeffersonian "natural aristocrats" rather than the overly familiar rascals and mountebanks of more recent times. If I have understood him, Wilson still believes that a return to a properly understood federalism and a concomitant revival of states' rights could restore not only the balance of government but even the balance between the public and the private realms. And again, if I have understood him, Wilson has indicated that the Republican Party has proved to be the treacherous instrument for pursuing any such restoration and regeneration of a healthy body politic.

There is much more to be considered and absorbed from this book. How refreshing it is to see Alexander Hamilton dispatched with such panache—and James Madison, as well. The opposite approach to John Taylor, George Mason, Nathaniel Macon, and St. George Tucker is most enlightening and useful in creating or reasserting a usable past that actually aims at ameliorating contemporary problems, rather than exacerbating them further.

Upon due consideration, I think that *From Union to Empire* is a book that any American could read with profit and pleasure. And I see it as the ideal gift for any young person perplexed by what the late Andrew Lytle called "the present confusion." Graced with informed perspective, humor, and surprising conclusions, these essays have convinced me that what this country needs is less of Woodrow, and more of Clyde, Wilson.

Contributing editor J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

Mexifornicating the Californicated

by Roger D. McGrath

Mexifornia: A State of Becoming
by Victor Davis Hanson
San Francisco: Encounter Books; 150 pp., $24.95

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Victor Davis Hanson, a professor of classics at California State University, Fresno, writes often and writes well. I have two of his books on ancient Greece. He is the only author who has ever explained to me how difficult it was to wreak permanent agricultural devastation on a typical Greek city-state: Pulling out grape vines is exhausting, and chopping down mature olive trees is backbreaking—if not an exercise in futility—so hard is the wood. Hoplite armies did not have the time or energy for such tasks. Hanson understands these things because he is, in addition to being a professor, a farmer. His own fields, near the San Joaquin Valley town of Selma, are now regularly damaged by illegal aliens from Mexico. The Mexican illegals, says Hanson in *Mexifornia*, have careened off the road and plowed through his fences, crops, and trees, costing him thousands of dollars. They have partied in his fields and left debris scattered far and wide. They have stolen his farm tools and equipment. They have pilfered the contents of his roadside mailbox. They have even broken into his house. Others have asked if they could rent his barn or an outbuilding as a "dormitory" for farm workers. Hanson has learned that the rentals are invariably put to another use—the production of methamphetamine.

Illegal aliens use his rural road as the county dump. Once a month, Hanson

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clears the roadside of beer bottles, tires, fast-food containers, and plastic lawn bags full of garbage, soiled diapers, and broken dishes. Every few months, he has to remove old and battered sofas, televisions, washers, dryers, and mattresses from his property. On two occasions, he caught the dumpers in the act and was greeted with curses, although he forced them to retrieve their discarded belongings. Twice, his discovery of receipts in the piles of trash enabled the sheriff to track down the culprits. Garbage collection in Selma is cheap, and the county dump is not far, yet, speculates Hanson,

> for some reason—perhaps an atavism from the old country where trash is everywhere dumped outside the city limits?—illegal aliens still go out to the country to dump their refuse, furniture, cars and pets on farmland.

He has resigned himself to the cleanup routine.

Cats and dogs, alive and dead, are also dumped on his property by illegal aliens. At the same time, the Mexican visitors to his farm shoot hawks, owls, ducks, quail, and foxes. They leave the carcasses to rot or to be devoured by coyotes, which the Mexicans "seem to regard almost as kin and so never shoot." On his nightly walks around his farm, he politely asks Mexican trespassers not to drink and leave their bottles behind and not to fire their guns. However,

> keeping illegal aliens and Mexican gang members off the property is a hopeless task; in the banter that follows my requests, some trespassers seem piqued that anyone in California should dare to insist on the archaic notion of property rights. One especially smart teenager told me in broken English, "Hey, it's our land anyway—not yours."

Hanson devotes most of *Mexifornia*, though, not to his own experiences with Mexican illegals but to the larger issues facing California. He does not miss much, and I find it difficult to argue with most of his assessment because it sounds so similar to what I have been saying in a dozen or more articles published in *Chronicles* and elsewhere for a decade. He declares that it is "high time for honest discussion, without fear of recrimination and intimidation. . . . It is not a very healthy state of affairs to have a voting population of millions thinking privately what they would never express publicly." Of course, many of us for more than a decade *have been* expressing publicly our concerns about illegal immigration and illegal aliens, while the Republican Party establishment—the neocons in particular—have pretended the problem did not exist.

I suppose I can criticize Hanson for being late to the party, but he has arrived with a bang and does not pull any punches. His principal arguments are that Mexicans immigrate illegally; that they do so in large numbers; that the Mexican government encourages the illegal migration; that, because of the Mexicans' alien status and proximity to Mexico, they are not intent on becoming Americans; that a separatist culture has developed; that this separatist culture is encouraged by our universities and by Chicano leaders; that the illegal aliens are a burden on the taxpayers; and that California is being rapidly and negatively transformed into a version of Mexico. Welcome aboard, Hanson!

Hanson dismisses the old government line that there are "only" six million illegal aliens nationwide and reckons that the true figure is probably closer to 12 million and growing. The majority of Mexicans come here to work but, nonetheless, consume benefits voraciously. A substantial minority has come for criminal opportunities: A quarter of the inmates in California's jails and prisons and a third of those arrested for drug trafficking are illegal aliens from Mexico. Criminal or not, they do not bother to learn English, and Mexican flags and decals decorate their cars. Even when afforded the opportunity, eight of ten Mexican immigrants do not become naturalized American citizens. They send billions of dollars back to Mexico each year. Somehow, they manage to forget the "legacy of autocracy, a corrupt legal system, tribalism, statism, endemic racism, poor education, an absence of family planning, the lack of religious diversity and a nationalism of bad faith" that sent them northward to the United States, the hated country of the gringos, in the first place.

Hanson is intimately familiar with the illegal aliens who work the farm fields of the San Joaquin Valley. His discussion of these workers is clearly his most original contribution. At the same time, however, this is Hanson at his weakest. While describing the life of the illegal alien in the farm country, he makes the claim that, should they be expelled from California, "within a year or two the state would be almost paralyzed—much of its food decaying, its hotels dirty, its dishes unwashed, its lawns and shrubs weedy and unkempt." Why? Because Americans will not do these jobs. This fallacy has been repeated, mantra-like, since the 1970's in California, until it passes for conventional wisdom.

When I first began to hear this nonsense, these very jobs were not only being done by Americans in California—although the transition to Mexican illegals was well under way—but done *almost exclusively* by Americans in such nearby states as Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Now those states, too, are making the transition to Mexican illegals. Why? Because employers can hire them for less. If that cheap, desperate labor pool evaporated, employers would have to pay higher wages to attract American workers again to those jobs. Currently, the taxpayer in California subsidizes employment of illegal Mexicans by paying for the crime they commit, their medical care, the birth and education of their children, and a portion of their food, housing, and transportation. I would gladly pay more for a head of lettuce or a hotel room if the taxpayer were saved eight billion dollars per year, the estimated annual cost of illegal aliens.

In other ways, Hanson's discussion of illegal-alien workers—at least those in the San Joaquin Valley—is inspired. He has worked beside them. He has hired them. He has taught their children. Their lives, although better than in Mexico, are full of dangers and vices. Their death rate from homicide is three-times greater than that of white Americans.

> It is daily fare in our local papers to read of bodies dumped in peach orchards, the putrid remains of corpses fished out of irrigation canals, or the body parts and bones of the long-dead uncovered by the cultivator. These are the remains of hundreds of young men from central Mexico who simply disappeared—shot or stabbed and then dumped by thieves and murderers.

They die from cirrhosis of the liver at double the rate for white Americans. Also double are their rates of gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, venereal warts, and HIV infection. Their rate of tuberculosis is 13-times greater than that of whites. Thanks

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to illegal aliens, tuberculosis is making a comeback in California. I remember in the early 1950's tuberculosis being described as a disease of some bygone era (Doc Holliday had it), and the last of the "consumptives," including one of my uncles—who had prospected and mined in Arizona—dying off.

While Hanson's discussion is generally confined to Mexican males, he notes that female illegals often do better than their male counterparts. The girls attend school more regularly and stay in school at twice the rate of the boys. They more often learn English and go further in school. They occasionally get well-paying jobs in the city after graduating from high school or college, while their menfolk toil in the fields for half the pay and benefits. This situation frequently fractures the traditional male-dominant relationship of Mexican couples.

For the most part, though, the illegal aliens, whether male or female, have turned entire towns of the San Joaquin Valley into Mexican villages. Parlier, once a respectable working-class town, is typical. Although the state and federal governments have combined to build subsidized tracts of single-family houses and a health center, the town is a shambles. Hanson describes a city government that

> plagued by constant corruption, recall elections and tribalism . . . is little more than a ward of the federal government. (Policing was for years taken over by the county.) The town is 99 percent Mexican or Mexican-American, often broke, and dependent upon state and federal money for almost all of its services. And yet it has nice streets, homes, clinics, and schools.

Hanson tries not to attribute any of this to race, instead saying that it is only a matter of culture. That is begging the question, however. Culture is made by people, and people make the cultures that best suit them. Does Hanson really believe that California would be the same place if it were 100 percent American Indian or *mestizo*? It is clear that those Mexicans with the most white blood in them generally rise to the top, whether in Mexico or in California, and those with the most Indian blood dwell at the bottom. There are exceptions, to be sure, but they only prove the rule. Mexicans themselves know this and are not afraid to acknowledge it. Hanson quotes a former Mexican resident of the San Joaquin Valley town of Mendota, which has become virtually all Mexican, as remarking that he left the town "when the last white people left." Hanson notes that this Mexican's

> unspoken, apparently racist, message was echoed by a resident of Parlier. . . . The latter boasted to me that he transferred all his children to nearby Kingsburg schools where "there are lots of white people."

Hanson argues hard that the problem is "multiculturalism" and not race. To a degree, he is right. If the minority racial element is small, then the minority can be forced to conform to the cultural mores and standards of the majority. However, once the numbers of the racial minority reach a critical mass, race trumps all, and the culture of the erstwhile majority race does not have to be accepted—nor should it. We are beginning to see this in California. If John Smith, quintessential Anglo, does not speak Spanish, for example, he can forget about applying for many a job. The language of hundreds of schools and dozens of neighborhoods in California is now Spanish. In those areas, Cinco de Mayo is a far greater celebration than Independence Day. Hanson laments the deconstruction of the "assimilationist model" of his youth that transformed Mexicans into Americans but fails to appreciate fully the powerful coercive factor that enabled that model.

Nowhere is the assimilationist model held in more disrepute than in California's universities. And nowhere in *Mexifornia* does Hanson have more fun describing the insanity that grips California. Perusing the schedule of classes for the University of California, Santa Barbara, for a recent academic year, he notes 62 listed under Chicano Studies, including "Methodology of the Oppressed," "Barrio Popular Culture," "Chicana Feminism," "History of the Chicano," "History of the Chicano Movement," "History of Chicano and Chicana Workers," "Chicano Political Organizing," and, my favorite (I think) "De-colonizing Cyber-Cinema." Meanwhile, the history department offers another 13 classes focusing on Chicanos and several on "race and oppression" but has only one class devoted—and only partly—to the Civil War, and none devoted to the Revolutionary War or World War II. Ironically, as I know all too well—a dozen of my friends, two brothers-in-law, a niece, and a nephew graduated from there—Santa Barbara is not a campus overflowing with Chicanos but with surfers dripping wet from ripping at Campus Point and Devereaux's, two surf spots within walking distance of the school.

Hanson dares to suggest that the number of Chicano-themed classes be reduced to perhaps ten and describes those who currently teach the classes as aging

> La Raza professors, who drive their SUVs in from the suburbs and send their kids to UCLA and Berkeley, [while they] continue in some time warp to denigrate a system that has given them and their families so much.

I watched this same phenomenon while teaching at UCLA for 15 years. We had a Chicano professor who played professional victim and revolutionary while drawing a fat salary for teaching and publishing very little. Hanson, who more than justifies his keep at California State University, Fresno, does not mince words.

> If "white" California is to be blamed for anything, it is for creating fiefdoms for hundreds of professors in the race business to fabricate classes and methods of instruction that impart almost none of the useful cultural information desperately needed by an alien seeking to prosper in America.

Hanson does not say it, but I will. These professors are nothing but race hustlers, like Jesse Jackson, and they have done more to balkanize California than any white segregationist could have dreamed of doing.

Years ago, I described all of this in articles and speeches to those living outside of California. The general response was along the lines of, "It's a California problem," followed by a smirk signifying that California is wacky, exceptional, and unlike the rest of the United States. Now, as the invasion of Mexican illegal aliens spreads to other states, I have seen an attitude change. If you are interested in what your state may look like in the future, you should read Victor Davis Hanson's *Mexifornia*. The picture is not pretty.

Corresponding editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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by Samuel Francis

Turning Away

By the end of last summer, it had become transparently obvious, even to the graying stallions of the "conservative movement," that organized conservatism in the United States since the 1950's has been a colossal failure. The failure has been clear enough to most percipient Americans for perhaps a decade or more (an essay I published in *Chronicles* in 1991 announcing the news was greeted with anger and denials by the "movement"), but what really signed and sealed the perception was a long article about the "Conservative Lament" in the *Washington Times* on August 24 by veteran political reporter Ralph Z. Hallow. For all the political bubbly water the conservatives quaffed at the rise and election of George W. Bush in 2000, the disappointing performance of his administration has helped confirm what must have been a lurking suspicion on the professional right that the disappointments went well beyond Mr. Bush and his policies.

"We won the battle against communism," Phyllis Schlafly sighed to Mr. Hallow, "but I guess we've largely lost the battle against big government, and we've lost lots of our liberties." No veteran of the conservative movement has a better right to pass such a judgment than Mrs. Schlafly, who was responsible for one of the few unequivocal victories of the right, the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970's, and she at least is one burdened by no illusions of a "conservative renaissance" or other slogans that today masquerade as "conservative thought."

Of course, it is even debatable whether it is correct to claim the defeat of communism as the one major accomplishment of the right, as most of the conservatives interviewed by Mr. Hallow, including Mrs. Schlafly, did. The Soviet Union and its empire collapsed, and it did so soon after Ronald Reagan left office; during the Reagan era itself, however, almost no serious anticommunist conservative believed the Soviets were on the run. Indeed, in 1987, toward the end of the Reagan administration, Rep. Jim Courter, then a rising anticommunist conservative congressman, published an article in the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* that explicitly stated that the Reagan defense build-up and "the Reagan Doctrine of promoting democratic resistance movements around the world" had both "been oversold" and that "pronouncements by the administration about 'having the Soviets on the run' are totally unwarranted."

When the dust of history is finally analyzed accurately, the Soviet collapse may well be seen as mainly the result of the destructive internal economic and political policies the communists inflicted on themselves and their subjects and of the fundamental delusions on which their ideology was founded, not the result of any virtues or valor on the part of an America reinvigorated by conservative anticommunism. Outside the Soviet Empire, of course, including inside our own country, much of the communist agenda continues to flourish, and the American right has accomplished virtually nothing in resisting or eradicating the near hegemony Marxist ideas still enjoy in American universities.

The conservative warhorses Mr. Hallow interviewed all dwelled on the central importance of one original goal of their movement, resisting the growth of "big government" and preserving the personal liberty the leviathan state threatened. But most seemed to recognize that this goal also has not been achieved. "What attracted me to conservatism in 1959 was the idea that maybe we could turn back the leviathan government that was taking away our liberties," Donald J. Devine, vice-chairman of the American Conservative Union, told the *Times*. "How little did I know we were living in a system with less federal presence and interference than we have now—44 years later." Richard Viguerie, justly celebrated for his pioneering of conservative direct-mail techniques, was one of the few activists interviewed who seemed to grasp any particular reason why the goal had not been achieved. The problem, he argued, was that "fighting to roll back the welfare state and return to constitutional government" tended to contradict the foreign-policy goal "of fighting communism, which requires increased expenditures and a bigger role for government in the national economy," not to mention restricting personal liberty in the interests of national security.

The rather somber reflections these conservatives, almost all of them in their 60's or older, offered were, in fact, somewhat refreshing, since most of what you get from the professional right these days is happy talk, not just shallow bumper-sticker chatter that serves mainly to inspire Teenage Republicans and the armchair Globo-Terminators who listen to Rush Limbaugh and believe every word but a smug chest-thumping about the country, the civilization, and the vital contributions that conservatives have supposedly made to them that is as repellent as it is untrue. It was therefore bracing to listen to these elders acknowledge that the cause to which they had devoted their lives had been less than successful.

Yet, aside perhaps from Mr. Viguerie himself, not a one seemed to have a clue as to why, and, with all due respect to the direct-mail czar, his explanation by itself is insufficient. One immediate reason for the failure of the "movement" was mentioned by David Keene of the American Conservative Union in his remark on how sagacious the movement's leaders had been to prune it of undesirables. "The early modern conservatives, led by Bill Buckley and others," Mr. Keene informed us,

> had to both confront the liberal establishment and shape a movement that wouldn't drive away more people than it attracted. Therefore, the Birchers, racists, anarchists and assorted monarchists and kooks were turned away.

Many were indeed turned away, and some needed to be, but the real targets of the conservative movement's obsession with "turning away" and purging

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anyone who did not fit were those who were not palatable to the "liberal establishment" the "movement" claimed to be "confronting." Only if the "movement" could convince the "establishment" that its adherents and beliefs were really no threat to the power of the establishment could the "movement" hope to gain the acceptance and "respectability" its leaders always craved.

The result of the "turning away" of which Mr. Keene and most other "movement" leaders are so proud was not only the evisceration of the right by the exclusion of any serious radical conservatism and its assimilation to the standards and values of the liberal establishment but the reduction of the ranks of the "movement" to the very cadre of bumper-sticker-quoters and Limbaugh-listeners that struts up and down the streets of Washington today—the political and ideological equivalent of a lobotomy. The "movement" spit out just about anyone who was interesting, different, or creative, as well as anybody with any inclinations to real conservative radicalism, and the end result was a well-drilled platoon of apparatchiks, enlivened by the occasional con artist and outright crook, as well as misfits like compulsive gamblers, pillheads, and perverts.

The internal tactics of the conservative movement still do not entirely explain its failure, however, nor do the personal inadequacies of its leadership. The tactical errors were made, and the flawed leaders emerged and remained leaders, because of deeper flaws that reflect the social and historical trends the "movement" itself sought but failed to arrest.

"Conservatism" in any society and in any era is always less of an ideology or body of thought than the natural expression of the dominant classes and forces that find themselves being threatened with displacement. What happened in the United States of the mid-20th century is that a new ruling class displaced the old one, and the "conservatism" that emerged was the ideological and political effort to resist the process of displacement that was occurring.

The "conservative movement" that developed in the resistance to the New Deal, intervention in World War II, and postwar Soviet communism reflected the values of the old ruling class and the culture it had constructed—private property and free enterprise, small government constrained by law, the nation-state, the nuclear family and the values that bound it together, and what in general is known as "bourgeois morality." Yet, as the old ruling class lost power and influence and its values and institutions withered, the resistance movement it had mounted decayed, ceasing to be a real force with roots and connections in the larger society and devolving into a collection of eccentric intellectuals and academics, marginal activists, and ideological cranks of all descriptions (the latter supplying most of the kinds of "kooks" who really should have been purged but who often wound up leading the movement). It is highly significant that the intellectual leadership of post-World War II conservatism came mainly from universities, not from business, politics, organized religion, or the literary and higher-journalistic professions. The latter are circles that actually reflect what is going on within a society, while academic oddballs do not. Academics may be brilliant and their ideas world-historical in importance, but what they think and write is typically quite disengaged from the social and cultural mainstream. So far from providing the intellectual substance of a vital conservatism, the academic writers of which most conservative leaders have long boasted were evidence that conservatism was dying and could be made comprehensible only through erudite elaboration.

What remained, then, was purely and simply a "movement" defined almost entirely by ideology of one kind or another rather than a body of thought and practice that reflected the real, living classes, beliefs, and institutions of functioning society. That is why conservative ideologists so often appeal to and identify with defunct epochs of history—the Middle Ages, the Old South, the glorious free market of the 19th century, the 1950's, *etc.* Alienated and uprooted from the society around them, they can turn only to the vanished or imaginary ones of the past. That is also why so many "kooks" always show up in the "movement"—crackpots with various free-market panaceas, conspiracy theorists, racial obsessives, religious nuts, outright occultists, and zealots peddling one political hallucination after another, as well as the inevitable troop of health-food faddists and flying-saucer chasers. Since the ideology to which the "conservative movement" appealed could no longer be defined and controlled by the dominant forces of the society, its natural tendency was to spin out of orbit and careen wildly across and beyond the political horizon.

The leading conservative politicians, from Robert A. Taft to the present, reflect the same trend. Men such as Taft and his generation represented a living class and culture that genuinely sought to conserve themselves by any honorable means. Conservatives who emerged after World War II—gentlemen like Richard Nixon and Joe McCarthy—were not the same kind of people, though by no means without their own virtues. The political leaders that the "conservative movement" eventually produced were almost all total nonentities. It is also significant that, of the most successful and enduring political figures of the American right since 1945—Nixon, McCarthy, George Wallace, Jesse Helms, and Ronald Reagan—not one came out of the "conservative movement," though some were willing to ally with it when useful, and the "movement" was quick to latch on to those who seemed to be useful to itself. All the direct mail, campaign schools, leadership training, and youth organizations the "movement" churned out resulted in not a single successful political figure.

The American conservative movement failed because history had passed it by. It ceased to represent any significant social force and easily fell victim to social pathologies and eccentricities, and the issues on which it tended to fixate simply ceased to be relevant to the real concerns of most Americans. To this day, not one of the conservative elder statesmen interviewed by Mr. Hallow has had any word to say about the impact of mass immigration on American society or the erosion of the national industrial base or the cultural and economic destruction of the middle class. Their preoccupation has mainly been with their own pet abstractions—"Liberty," "National Security," "A Defense Second to None," "Traditional Values," "the Judeo-Christian Tradition"—most of which are fine but none of which consists of much more than rhetorical opacities trying to mask the social and cultural vacuum in which the "movement" resides.

Twenty years ago, a reporter writing a story similar to the one Mr. Hallow wrote last summer would have interviewed almost all the same people who are the movement's "elders" now. Today, there are virtually no "conservative leaders" any younger to interview. The American right, at least as it was defined by the "conservative movement," is dead. And it died childless.

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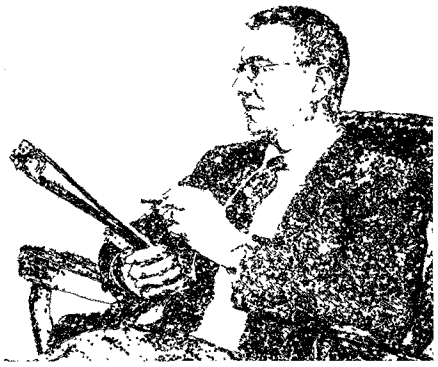
by Scott P. Richert

Always Dead Downtowns. Always.



In late October, federal agents committed blasphemy against one third of the libertarian trinity of Microsoft, McDonald's, and Wal-Mart. In a coordinated raid on Wal-Mart headquarters and 60 Wal-Mart stores in 21 states, the feds arrest 245 illegal aliens, 235 of whom were working for a subcontractor who provided janitorial services for the chain. (The other ten had originally been employed by the subcontractor but were later hired on directly.) Wal-Mart executives, of course, immediately denied knowing that the janitors were illegal aliens, but federal officials revealed to the Associated Press that the sting had been preceded by wiretaps, which provided plenty of evidence to the contrary.

No one should be surprised, and not simply because Wal-Mart has been investigated twice before (in 1998 and 2001) for similar violations. Companies rarely become monopolies by following the rules, and it is hard to argue that, as the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart is anything but a monopoly. The company had $244.5 billion in sales worldwide in the last fiscal year and ranks number one in sales in the United States; *Forbes*, which lists Wal-Mart as number six on the Forbes 500 list (it was number one last year), predicts that, at its current 16-percent growth rate, Wal-Mart's annual sales will top one trillion dollars within ten years. Whether it is sewing "Made in the USA" tags inside clothes produced overseas (as it did in the 1980's) or undercutting smaller stores' prices just long enough to put its competitors out of business, Wal-Mart is playing to win—and, like most monopolies, it's not particularly concerned about the costs. Going through a subcontractor to hire illegal aliens effectively minimized any penalties Wal-Mart might incur. Those pesky wiretaps, however, might come back to haunt individual executives.

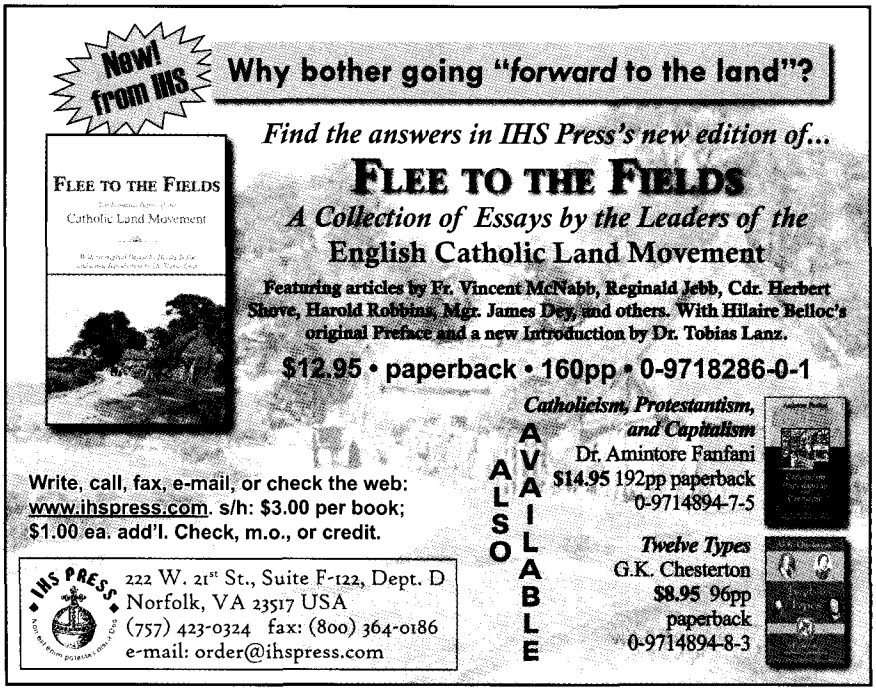
The personal wealth of Sam Walton's heirs gives the lie to Wal-Mart's slogan—"Always Low Prices. Always." *Forbes* notes that, "If Sam were alive today, he would be worth twice as much as Bill Gates," who topped this year's Forbes 400 list with a personal fortune of $46 billion. Warren Buffett sits in second place, while Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen brings up third. The next five slots, however, are occupied by Waltons, and their combined wealth ($102.5 billion) nearly matches that of the first three ($104 billion). And the Waltons only control 38 percent of Wal-Mart's stock. Despite the propaganda from big-market conservatives, that fortune was not made entirely on volume. As Samuel Francis wrote a few years ago, when Wal-Mart removed Maurice Bessinger's barbecue sauce from its shelves because Bessinger was a vocal supporter of the Confederate Flag,

> My own bet is that you can find plenty of products at Wal-Mart made by slave labor, but slavery—at least the kind that really exists today as opposed to the kind that has been extinct in this country for more than a century—apparently is not "an activity with which Wal-Mart does not wish to be associated."

The exploitation of illegal aliens amounts to simply more of the same.

Here in Rockford, Wal-Mart took root years ago, anchoring the East State Street corridor of strip malls and big-box stores with its store and Sam's Club out by the tollway, at the corner of East State and Perryville. A Wal-Mart Supercenter—the plus-size version of Wal-Mart with a full-service grocery store, auto center, drugstore, vision center, bakery, and photo lab, among other things—dominates the corner of Riverside and Forest Hills Road, just south of the city of Loves Park (which, together with Machesney Park, its neighbor to the north, is lovingly referred to in Rockford as "Parkansas").

Now, however, Wal-Mart is spreading like kudzu across the Rockford area. A cynic might argue that they are moving in for the kill, taking advantage of Rockford's economic depression—the worst since the early 1980's—to provide free advertising for their gospel of convenience and frugality. The company is planning a new Supercenter on 35 acres northwest of town, at the corner of Owen Center and Meridian Road; a second store north-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west of the Parkansas Supercenter; and another Supercenter on East State Street next to the current store, which will close down. In addition, Wal-Mart is planning a Supercenter on 87 acres of farmland outside of Belvidere, the next town east of Rockford, where its full-service grocery will compete against Dal Pra Pacemaker, the only local grocer of any size remaining in the Rockford area. (Hilander and Logli, the two leading local chains, were bought out in 1998 by Kroger and Schnucks, respectively, though they retain their local names. Gray's, another local chain, is an IGA franchisee.)

While the Meridian Road Supercenter will not be completed until the spring of 2005 at the earliest, Wal-Mart's announcement has already had a chilling effect on the economy of northwest Rockford. Eagle Foods, a Midwestern chain that has been struggling for years, declared bankruptcy this past spring and sold off its assets this fall. Eagle could not sell its North Main Street store, however; neither Kroger nor Schnucks was willing to invest in a building that is within easy driving distance of the coming Wal-Mart. It sits vacant, across the street from a Kmart that has been empty for three years and in front of a shuttered 350,000-square-foot factory, offering mute testimony to a struggling local economy that will not be revived by sending an increasing share of Rockfordians' wages to Little Rock.

Eagle faced a similar problem in Belvidere. Ultimately, it sold its state-of-the-art store there to a food distributor, which will use it as a warehouse, leaving Dal Pra Pacemaker as the only full-service grocery in town—until Wal-Mart arrives. Tony Dal Pra was genuinely sad to see his only competition go under, but he now hopes to increase his own sales enough over the next two years so that, when the Supercenter opens, he might sink back only to his current level of business. Wal-Mart, however, is unlikely to be satisfied with such a partial victory.

And it probably won't have to be. Over the last three years, Rockford has lost 20 percent of its manufacturing jobs; unemployment is hovering around double digits; our property taxes are $400 higher (on a $100,000 house) than the next highest property taxes in Illinois; and no service-sector or information-technology company is waiting in the wings to save us. And, as G.K. Chesterton wrote, "We cannot all live by taking in each other's washing . . . " Or, to paraphrase country singer Collin Raye, "I needed a new town for my new start / selling VCR's in Parkansas at a Wal-Mart."

Ideally (or so it has always seemed to me), you should be able to walk to your local grocer, who should be able to handle most of your daily needs. Now, the day may be coming when being able to *drive* to a grocer within the city limits of Rockford will seem like a luxury. I am sure, however, that our libertarian friends would say that I am being too pessimistic. After all, if things are all that bad, the market will prevail, and no one will want to drive to a grocer within the city limits of Rockford anyway—because no one will be living here. c

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Letter From Illinois

by Bruce Guernsey

American Hardware

◆

Just lay your hardware on the table, cowboy, and keep them hands up high.

Last Sunday, I bumped into Ron at the hardware store. In the central Midwest, where I live, it's not unusual to meet an old friend pushing his cart full of home repairs, especially on a Sunday. True Value and Ace are to us what Starbucks is to those in the big city. There, it's espresso and croissants; here, WD-40 with a fresh roll of duct tape. The hardware store is also where everyone seems to go after church; or, more and more, instead of church, plaster replacing prayer on the Lord's Day.

Ron was coming down the aisle that I was headed up, neither of us looking where he was going, preoccupied. A pipe was leaking in my basement, and I was scanning the shelves for cement to help hold the plastic fittings tight. Something always needs fixing in a house, but, after my divorce, the place I'd moved into seemed particularly fragile: holes in the roof, ripped screens, the plumbing gone sour. If a man's home is his castle, mine was under siege, but the enemy was within. I had come to see the cliché about putting your life back together in terms of my house. Too bad there's no homeowner's insurance for sorrow, no "good hands" to be in but your own. Thus, patching this or that in the old place became a symbol of self-repair, and I'd started going to the local hardware religiously.

Ron is a former neighbor, the kind of guy who's good with tools and can fix most anything. Our wives had gotten along well, and our kids were roughly the same age, so Ron and I had grilled a lot of chicken together during backyard evenings over the years. He had also saved me both headaches and cash with his do-it-yourself handiwork. For reasons that probably Freud could best explain, I never adopted my father's similar fix-it abilities. I'd turned to words instead of wood, to semicolons, not nails. I envied the men who could do such things and, if they were women, got scared.

We collided where plumbing meets electrical, both of us shocked back into the present from wherever we were, whoever it was. "Hey." "Howyabeen?" "I don't believe it." "What's goin' on?"—the usual guy talk from two guys who hadn't seen each other in a couple of years. Seeing how you yourself have changed is next to impossible; that's what class reunions are for. "He's older; good thing I'm not," we say to ourselves as I did, looking at Ron as he stared at me. His burly, Polish shape was gone. "Ski" was skinny but not around the eyes, where lines he never had before tugged them down. "Looks like you've lost some weight," he said, and I wondered which of us was talking.

We both were, just as we had tried to stay in touch after I had moved from town to county three years back. A beer here, a beer there, then we gradually went our separate ways. When I'd heard that his wife was sick, I called and was pleased to hear she was doing better. "We'll beat this," he said. "Not much of a lump. We found it early." Same old Ron, still saying "we." No man loved his wife more. And there, too, was that old confidence I'd come to count on, no matter how horrible the house disaster was that he came over to fix—and did. His attitude and strength were the same back then, a pipe wrench in his thick hand, as they were that time on the phone. If only we were all like houses, made of concrete or wood.

Doris died the following Christmas. I was out of the country when it happened but did send a card. Our meeting at American Hardware was the first chance I'd had to say "I'm sorry" in person, something I should have done months ago. Why hadn't I, I wondered, as we stood there talking about the Bears. Partly my own troubles, I'm sure, but a kind of shyness, too—an awkwardness with feelings. But another voice, a new one, more self-assured, had begun to emerge within me in the last few months—a voice that seemed to understand courage in a new way, to define strength differently. To the cowardly me, it said: *You're getting better at home repairs, now it's time to get better at the more demanding ones—the emotional kind. Give this guy a hug, dammit!*

I would have had to climb over our burdened carts to do so, and men embracing among electrical sockets and ball joints would have been a little more than this small town can handle, especially on a Sunday. Instead, we talked for almost an hour—and not just about football or varieties of waterproof cement. Right there on the hardwood hardware floor, we got positively Emersonian, by God, talking self-reliance and what it was like to be alone. "I love my house, Guerns. It keeps me going," and I told Ron I felt the same way. I'd come to like being my own carpenter and plumber. My father would have been proud—even amazed.

Not that either Ron or I had started subscribing to *House Beautiful* or anything. Our goals were hardly decorative, nor were they simply practical. My old man had learned how to fix things because we were poor, though he certainly took pride in what he did. I could now afford to hire a plumber but chose not to, because home repair had become self-repair—as it had, I realized, for Ron. You could see it in the sadness of his eyes. I think he saw it, too, in mine.

The spiritual side of Emerson's notion of self-reliance has long since been replaced by Pat Sommerall's sermon from Mount Hardware or Bob Vila's salvation-by-Sears. But Ron and I were clearly in that store of edges and angles for more than just the old macho reasons—or the cheapo ones, either. A couple of softies in a hard place, we were there precisely to make repairs—but from the outside in. I want to believe that inside every John Wayne, with his two-fisted syllables, is the more vulnerable Marion Morrison—his real, more lyrical name—but know that every day I have to duel it out with that part of me called "The Duke" just like every other American male has or will.

Give this man a hug, dammit. OK, here goes, and I tried, but Ron seemed to have the same idea, and we banged together like tackles and guards in a clatter of plastic elbows and dripless faucets we scattered from the shelves. From all over the store, people came running. What, they must have wondered aisles away, could have started all that laughing?

Bruce Guernsey is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Eastern Illinois University.

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Letter From London

by Andrei Navrozov

A Question of Boredom

Anybody who has ever watched a home video knows how painful is the passing of unedited time. No matter what or who is the subject of the exposition—sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, deep conversation, one's own or other people's children, Osama bin Laden—time in the raw is all but unbearable. Clearly, it is only through the faculty of art that one can ever grab hold of this amorphous, molasses-like mass of undifferentiated minutes and hours, infuse it with excitement, comeliness, and meaning, and refine it into some fragment of life more or less deserving of the name. Which, incidentally, echoes the old gnostic contention that the great demiurge created the finite universe out of endless chaos principally for the purpose of his own entertainment.

Yet art is widely perceived as the domain of the irrational, the elemental, and the hermetic and is often, with much justification, held up in opposition to those other domains where reason, order, and clarity seem to hold sway. And the art that made the world—at least in the eyes of anyone who has ever read a Russian novel, or heard a passage of German Romantic music, or regarded a modern painting with sympathy—is no exception. For the world, in those anxious eyes, alas, bears hardly any resemblance to a Corinthian column or a leaf from *Principia Mathematica*.

Still, steadfastly though our world refuses to get fitted up for the Procrustean organon of anesthetizing science, incisive logic, and convenient symmetry, our culture is intended to act as something of an Apollonian damper on all that fiery Dionysian stubbornness. And this, in art as in life.

Consider for a moment the plight of the jealous lover, for instance, in the half-century from Dumas-*fils* to Proust. There is a man deeply conditioned by his culture, and there he stands, with his coat collar up, at 22 minutes past midnight, in a cobbled alleyway appertaining to some terribly fashionable *arrondissement*, gazing with despair into the dimly lit window above wherein a shadow, or perhaps two, may be glimpsed through imperfectly drawn curtains. And as the illuminated, but then, of course, inexorably darkening, window frames, focuses, and edits his very life, so, too, does his culture frame, focus, and edit his feelings, making them—well, why shouldn't I say it?—yes, making them art.

Now compare that to what a senior vice president, European operations, at Bankers Trust would be doing, were he to find himself today in the same fix upon taking up with a Hungarian stripper of infinite sophistication and charm, mercifully a figure as plausible in the 21st century as in the 20th or the 19th. He would almost certainly begin by installing what is known in the trade as "clandestine audio monitoring" into her silvery Nokia, whereupon his life would become just what it had always been—boring. Boring, because unedited, artless, raw, a nauseating stream of ultimately meaningless episodes, insights, juxtapositions.

"But at least he would know the truth," a myope may argue. Not at all—and I say this as a certified myope myself, with 20/400 vision, which I once attempted to correct by wearing spectacles. Forgive this politically correct turn of phrase, but I found that the spectacles did not make me see *better*, just *differently*. I am sure that every astronomer who has had occasion to use the most powerful telescopes in the world will confirm that our eye for the truth is always bigger than our stomach.

"But is she two-timing him, that's the point!" The point of having a car, it would seem, is to get from A to B in a hurry. In John Gray's *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*, however, I read that the average American "puts in 1600 hours to get 7500 miles, less than five miles an hour, not much more than he could travel on his own feet," out of his emotional attachment to his vehicle. So, even when regarded statistically, truths are never as empirical as they first appear. "But what you're saying, then, is that he should be playing some kind of game, performing some prelusive ritual, some ludicrous obeisance to the ideal of courtship?" I certainly am. If the poet player is never bored when he is at the gaming table, it is because art defeats boredom. Besides, as I say, there is simply no other way of ever seeing the truth because, without art, truth is largely invisible.

The received view of science, writes Gray, encourages us to believe that "we can understand the natural world, and thereby bend it to our will."

> Yet, in fact, science suggests a view of things that is intensely uncomfortable to the human mind. The world as seen by physicists such as Erwin Schrödinger and Werner Heisenberg is not an orderly cosmos. It is a demi-chaos that humans can hope to understand only in part. Science cannot satisfy the human need to find order in the world. The most advanced physical sciences suggest that causality and classical logic may not be built into the nature of things. Even the most basic features of our ordinary experience may be delusive.

Our culture, in short, is failing us. Instead of caging the fire of the human soul in the ice of reason, and furnishing us with a serviceable phenomenology—as well as a beautiful choreography—in the process, it reduces everything under its lightless sun to the same boring gray mush of tepid rational assumptions to which, as a matter of practical reality, nobody pays the slightest attention. Indeed, a rational god is much easier to ignore than a human one, and the eventual consequence of elevating reason to that exalted position is every Tom, Dick, and Harry ("Wha'? I got brains too, man!") feeling himself at one with the godhead. The final result, in short, is absolute solipsism.

Once society reaches that freezing point, all art—that is to say, all thought, all fun, all entertainment—stops forthwith, because, like the notion of a human God, the idea of art is exclusive, aristocratic, and based on universal acceptance of an authority that cannot be readily shared or easily acquired. The Lord was like this, runs the idea, just like every Tom, Dick, and Harry in some senses, certainly, but also unimaginably, unreachably better than they in so many other senses. Why? Because He was born that way, stupid, with a silver spoon in His mouth! Don't you remember? A whole bunch of kings came to adore Him and to congratulate the new mum.

The poet, too, sits at his desk, twiddles his thumbs, and looks for a word to rhyme with "insurance," just like any advertising-agency flunky moving his lips to the tune of a winning jingle. But one is a nobleman; the other, a commoner; and, when society no longer acknowledges the chasm between them ("Wha'? I got rhymes too, baby!"), it grows barbarous in that chilling, atom-age, uniquely

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modern, as yet not fully understood sense in which human existence is perceived to hold no more meaning than the existence of slime mold. And, lest we forget, much the same chasm separates lover and private investigator, philosopher and newspaper journalist, gambler and greedy stockbroker.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

Darkness on the Edge of Town

◆

I became aware of it as I was walking our dog in the neighborhood around our new home in Arkansaw, Wisconsin: the utter silence around me under the shroud of a clear winter's nighttime sky. The darkness on the edge of town where my home is located underscored the reasons we had chosen to live there.

Being on the edge afforded plenty of space to walk the wirehair terrier and ponder what all of this meant. I can pull out of the driveway of my little 1960's rambler home right into the parking lot of Arkansaw Middle School, just across the street. A football practice field, a softball diamond, and a playground are also nearby. The town cemetery is just behind the town garage at the end of the school driveway; beyond that, there is nothing but fields, farms, and hills.

If you drive around rural Wisconsin on a snowy winter's night, as I often do as a newspaper reporter, you always look off into the distance for the glow in the sky that announces the presence of an upcoming town. It relieves the mind to know that there is a port in the storm, even if you don't have to stop (or want to)—like a ship's captain on the Great Lakes relieved to see the lighthouse.

You wouldn't get that kind of glow from Arkansaw, however, with its population of 300. If you looked at an aerial nighttime map of western Wisconsin, you could draw a line between the light and darkness, right down the middle of several counties. To the west are the lights that announce the Twin Cities metro area; to the east, rural Wisconsin.

I wouldn't have minded staying in East Ellsworth, Ellsworth, or somewhere around there. It would have been a lot easier for my wife and me to get to our jobs, but I didn't have $160,000 to spend on a home. That's the minimum around there; the further west you go, the more expensive it gets. Land is at a premium because the Twin Cities metro area continues to sprawl further in all directions.

The metro area is coming, at least for what remains of western Pierce, St. Croix, and Polk counties. They're just too close. The town fathers of Ellsworth know it, too. A new subdivision goes up in the spring, and more houses are being built in the village's existing subdivision, with the blessing of the authorities. At least they have a growth plan that is limited. They have plenty of examples of what they don't want to become—a Woodbury, Minnesota, or a Hudson, with its valleys and hills filled with ticky-tack. My friend Harvey Stower, a former state legislator and now mayor of Amery, exemplifies the dilemma of any small-town statesman. Caught between the no-growth forces and those of fire-up-the-bulldozers, there has to be a balance. The increasing costs of city services and schools require an expanded tax base, yet, the more people you have, the more such costs increase.

A lot of these costs are brought on by the newcomers themselves. Like any red-blooded American, they want it all—suburban convenience at country prices. Too many two-lane roads that increase commute times? Make them four-lane roads. Not enough retail business on Main Street? Build strip malls. Not enough to do in town? Build recreation centers like those found in the lands the newcomers left behind. Don't like the smell of the countryside? Ask for onerous environmental regulations that small farmers cannot afford. Schools a little too ordinary? Ask for referenda to build Taj Mahals. The newcomers made the difference in a referendum Ellsworth held a few years back on whether to build a new indoor pool in town. The village may have needed a new swimming hole, but not the domed Olympic-sized pool complete with water slide that the suburbanites have come to expect wherever they live. And then they wonder why their property taxes are so high.

I don't think the developers are going to come our way, unless someone thinks of Arkansaw as a bedroom community for Menomonie, which is 21 miles away. Our county, Pepin, named after two French fur-trapping brothers, is one of the smallest and poorest in the state. The nearest major town is the county seat, Durand, but it has only 2,000 people. It is too far from the Twin Cities or even nearby Eau Claire for commuters, except for the occasional country home or McMansion on some hillside or hilltop. There will be no Levittowns here. After watching a Frontline documentary on PBS about the "Lost Children of Rockland County," a suburb of Atlanta, I certainly don't want my future children to live in one.

I want them living right here, near playgrounds and open fields, where a dairy farm can be part of the neighborhood and not stand out, and the hills are green in the summertime, orange in the fall, and white in the winter; where we can have a picnic at Arkansaw Creek Park, inside the cool gorge the waters cut through the rock to create half of the town. I have a spacious yard, too, but it's not swallowed up by all the lights. On the edge of Arkansaw, there's a darkness that allows you to see the stars.

Sean Scallon is a newspaper reporter in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.

LIBERAL ARTS

ALL THINGS TO ALL DUDES

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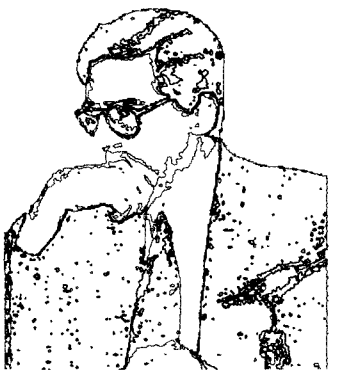
by Srdja Trifkovic

Lord Ashdown's Balkan Fiefdom



For 200 years, the Balkan states have been manipulated by the powers of "Old Europe" to slow and control the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. They were created, enlarged, and shrunk as the need arose. During the two world wars, the territories inhabited by southern Slavs were used as bargaining chips in constructing alliances, while their inhabitants' ethnic loyalties and aspirations were never taken seriously.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-95) followed this trend. It was the most destructive segment of the War of Yugoslav Dissolution that began when the republics of Slovenia and Croatia seceded in the summer of 1991. The chief outcome of the war was a transformed NATO coupled with the renewal of American influence in Europe to an extent not seen since before the Vietnam War.

International intervention could not alter the underlying dynamics of Bosnia's deeply divided communities, however. Because of foreign involvement, the war lasted longer than it would have and the future of the Republika Srpska (R.S.) is perhaps more uncertain, but the settlement that followed Dayton was a plausible compromise that could have been reached in April 1992.

Over the last eight years, Bosnia has become the first major experiment of the "international community" in nation-building, demonstrating that international bureaucrats are no more virtuous or high-minded than the old rogues who governed nation-states. Two years ago, I reported on the case of Thomas Miller, the former U.S. ambassador in Sarajevo, who is said to have conspired in the summer of 2000 with Milorad Dodik, then the R.S. prime minister, to divert $500,000 of an American aid package to the Gore-Lieberman presidential campaign. My sources said that Miller was behind the scheme "because he is a committed Democrat, just like all other key U.S. officials in Bosnia: Jacques Klein, Ralph Johnson, and Robert Berry all rooted for Gore."

The alleged diversion was neither the first nor the last impropriety involving foreign funds in post-Dayton Bosnia. In the summer of 1999, the Office of the High Representative (OHR)—the U.N. proconsulate in Sarajevo that wields the real power in the hybrid country—confirmed that more than *one billion dollars* had been lost in postwar Bosnia through tax evasion, customs fraud, or embezzlement of public funds. Much of that money was simply stolen from international aid projects, worth over five billion dollars in 1996-99 alone. Another form of institutionalized corruption involved international officials who lobby on behalf of companies from their countries. Lower down the scale, foreign bureaucrats—especially those from Eastern Europe and the Third World—were accused of involvement in the smuggling of American cigarettes from Montenegro to the European Union by way of Bosnia.

Things have become even worse since Paddy Ashdown, a failed British politician with a life peerage, replaced Wolfgang Petritsch at the OHR in May 2002. A report published last summer by the European Stability Initiative claims that Ashdown displays a "bewildering conception of democratic politics," and his exercise of absolute powers in Sarajevo is frustrating the establishment of a democracy. It warned that the excessive powers vested in the "high representative" discourage local political initiative and reinforce a culture of international dependency. The report singled out Ashdown's alarming authoritarian tendencies: He imposes, on average, 14 decrees every month, compared with an average of four in 1999. It concluded that there are no checks and balances on his powers and no accountability, whether local or international:

> [The OHR can] dismiss presidents, prime ministers, judges, and mayors without having to submit its decisions for review. It can veto candidates for ministerial positions without needing publicly to present any evidence. . . . The HR is not accountable to any elected institution at all.

Such arbitrariness and lack of accountability are having a negative effect on the Bosnian economy and the development of a free market—as a British company (for which I have provided consulting services in what I believe to be a just and worthy cause), Energy Financing Team, has learned the hard way over the past nine months.

EFT is an energy trading and investment group that was in the forefront of the development of a regional electricity market in the Balkans and in the refurbishment and expansion of the generation and transmission network in the war-ravaged former Yugoslavia. Since 2000, it has provided the financing that links energy producers and users in Southeastern Europe and has absorbed risk in an area where the capital markets are still developing. It has been successful in purchasing surplus power from the Republika Srpska and selling it to neighboring utilities that have shortages (notably, in Albania, Montenegro, and Croatia). It has also provided financing for the purchase of goods and the completion of civil-engineering works in the Bosnian-Serb Republic, receiving repayment in the form of energy transfers. The largest of these projects involves the completion of a reservoir tunnel in which EFT has invested almost $30 million.

EFT has single-handedly monetized electric energy in the region. It effectively advances the cause of intercommunal harmony by operating across political and ethnic boundaries and facilitates the economic reintegration of former war zones. It is creating jobs in Bosnia and bringing investment to an area still considered too risky by most other Western companies, thus reducing the need for British, American, and other Western taxpayers to continue to subsidize the region indefinitely.

Nonetheless, EFT was singled out for criticism by an OHR-approved auditor for its allegedly corrupt practices in obtain-

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ing contracts. Apparently, the company has become collateral damage in Paddy Ashdown's crusade for a more centralized, more tightly integrated Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which the entities would eventually lose all of the remaining attributes of independent statehood.

Ashdown believes that the leading political groups in the entities—especially the Serbian Democratic Party in the Republika Srpska—derive their power from the control of three public companies that generate substantial amounts of money: power, telecoms, and forestry. Believing that these sectors exhibit widespread corruption, the OHR decided to audit the main state-owned companies running them. In the case of the electrical utilities, Ashdown's strategy had as a clear secondary goal the "softening up" of opposition to power-sector restructuring—*i.e.*, the merging of the Serb, Croat, and Muslim utility companies into all-Bosnian conglomerates.

The special auditor—an American CPA with previous savings-and-loan experience and no known expertise in the energy sector—issued a report on the Bosnian-Serb electric utility company (EPRS) on February 25, 2003. The report harshly condemned its operations and management, and, in immediate response, Ashdown ordered the dismissal of the R.S. energy minister and of the director-general of EPRS. The special auditor severely criticized EFT's alleged dominance in the tenders and its involvement in the reservoir-tunnel project.

The accusations were made without proper investigation, without standard audit practice and test procedures, and without warning. Many claims were made on the basis of hearsay: "[W]e were told" more than once accompanies serious allegations. The report is full of factual errors, claiming, for example, that EFT's contracts specify certain favorable terms that would apply in the event that EPRS generation capacity was unavailable. The contracts show the opposite: There are no favorable terms; on the contrary, EFT was committed to providing emergency energy supplies in case of reduced generating capacity. At no time did the special auditor contact EFT. The company's first warning came when the report was leaked to the *Nezavisne Novine* newspaper in early 2003.

EFT responded immediately by instructing its London solicitors, Clyde & Co., to produce a ten-page rebuttal of the auditor's comments and allegations. At a subsequent meeting with Ashdown and his aides, EFT agreed to submit a detailed dossier defending its name and reputation, which the company produced in less than a week. In addition, five reports by separate R.S. commissions have all concluded that EFT's conduct had been entirely blameless.

Following the presentation of its dossier, EFT has sought redress from the Office of the High Representative with the support of the British Foreign Office. It has asked for a statement from the OHR and/or the OSCE (the special auditor's employers) indicating that the company has fully cooperated with the special auditor, that it has produced a substantial amount of data and documentation, and that all concerns raised by the report have been fully allayed. Such assurances are essential if EFT is to continue normal operations. The auditor's allegations have already harmed EFT's operations in countries as diverse as Switzerland and Hungary.

More than eight months after the report's publication and five months after the company's detailed dossier was presented to Ashdown, EFT is still waiting for a formal response from the "international community's" proconsular team in Sarajevo. So far, it has received only a terse reply from the auditor—a letter simply stating, "We disagree with your response."

In a normal country, with political, legal, and moral checks and balances in operation, this behavior would not be possible. In Lord Ashdown's Balkan fiefdom, it is commonplace. The immediate effect of the affair is a major reduction in the generation of electricity in the Republika Srpska, harming her budget and increasing the price of electricity for neighboring importers. Its long-term consequence will be to make other foreign companies weary of operating in a market where *ad hoc* decisions by unelected and unaccountable foreigners can alter the rules of the game overnight. Bosnia is in a shambles: Since the end of the war in 1995, she has received almost six billion dollars in reconstruction aid, but the beneficiaries were assorted crooks, international bureaucrats, and foreign contractors. She is now ranked economically behind Albania; in Southeastern Europe, only Moldova is poorer.

This matter deserves urgent attention from Western political leaders and legislators, because their countries' taxpayers have been underwriting Bosnia, Inc., for the past decade. Indulging Ashdown, Deputy High Representative Donald Hays, and others by allowing them to continue running Bosnia like a feudal fiefdom is not only detrimental to peace and stability in the Balkans, it is expensive.

Furthermore, Ashdown and Hays directly undermine the "War on Terror" by continuing to support the Islamic side in Bosnia. Both recently gave credence to the Muslims' claim that 7,000 of their men were killed at Srebrenica in 1995 and helped to arrange Bill Clinton's visit to unveil a monument there. That figure has been repeatedly challenged—most recently by the International Strategic Studies Association—as "vastly inflated and unsupported by evidence." The ISSA warned that one-sided interventionist policies permitted Al Qaeda forces and radical Muslims to take root during the Bosnian war, clouding the future of the region, and added that the "memorialization" of false numbers in the monument perpetuates regional ethnic hatred and distrust. ISSA President Gregory Copley accused Ambassador Hays of using the power of the Office of the High Representative to force Bosnian Serb elected officials to sign a fraudulent document accepting the official version of events in Srebrenica. Copley added that, according to intelligence obtained from Islamic sources, the monument was intended to become a shrine for radical Muslims in Europe and a site for annual pilgrimages. In his words, Hays and Ashdown seek "to vindicate Clinton Administration policies of support for the radical Islamists."

Such behavior by Bosnia's foreign administrators discredits the very term *democracy* by associating it with the voluntaristic whims of a small coterie of arrogant bureaucrats. To them, *democracy* does not signify broad participation of informed citizens in the business of governance; it denotes the *desirable social and political outcome* of ostensibly popular decisions. Accordingly, if the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina vote for nationalist political parties—as they did, overwhelmingly, a year ago—such "wrong" outcomes are not seen by Ashdown as an *exercise of democracy* but as *violations thereof*.

And yet, in spite of Ashdown's efforts, eight years after Dayton, the international nation-builders' goal of a "multiethnic" Bosnia remains as elusive as ever. It is still unclear how Bosnia can democratically develop and sustain the dynamics of a viable polity. c

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SOCIETY

The Communitarian Warlord

by Justin Raimondo

Remember communitarianism? It was one of those embarrassing fads of the 1990's, like Furbies, Beanie Babies, and the "Third Way," a socio-moral movement that was meant to signify all things warm and cuddly. As articulated in his 1993 book, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda* (1993), and in two sequels, communitarian guru Amitai Etzioni sought to solve the problem of "atomization" and individualism supposedly run rampant by embracing such large, nebulous bromides as "community," "responsibility," and "dialogue," cloaking an essentially neoconservative critique of modern society in the therapeutic jargon of the era.

Bill Clinton left a copy of Etzioni's book conspicuously on display at his White House office, and Hillary Clinton cited Etzioni in *It Takes A Village*. Etzioni fondly recalls that, at a New Year's Eve party, President Clinton confided, "You are my inspiration"—although for what, he did not say.

That was hardly Etzioni's first visit to the corridors of power. He was a senior advisor to President Jimmy Carter, and he is often credited with helping shape the determinedly centrist policy prescriptions of the Democratic Leadership Council. In the 1990's, his various attempts to make an impact as a "public intellectual" culminated in the birth of the communitarian movement, whose doctrines are fuzzy but whose purpose is clear. As Richard Boynton put it in a review of Etzioni's memoir, *My Brother's Keeper*, the guru of communitarianism has "spent much of his energy . . . trying to whisper in the ear—any ear!—of those in power."

His purpose, aside from having access to power for its own sake, is hard to discern as we cut through the thickets of touchy-feely verbiage that describe communitarian doctrine. One big surprise, however, is that a movement that sounds like one of those California cults devoted to the healing power of Cosmic Love also holds a hard-line pro-war, pro-interventionist position that might be described as New Age Militarism.

Etzioni was one of 59 prominent and would-be prominent writers and intellectuals who signed a declaration supporting the Iraq war, and he describes his travails while on an international speaking tour to promote the war. All those ungrateful Germans did not seem to understand the sheer beneficence of the undertaking. Etzioni was shocked—shocked!—to hear Prof. Ekkehart Krippendorff from the Free University, "a well known, left-leaning professor," argue "that it is wrong in principle for intellectuals to support a government. 'They should be critical; you never know what a government will do with its power.'" And those Frenchmen! Why, the ungrateful cads, they had better shut up about Iraq because, as Etzioni relates:

> At this point I lost it. I allowed that they could afford to be de facto pacifists, as long as we were the bullies, on call to save them. Who kept West Berlin free? Our airlift. Who stopped Hitler? The Dutch? The French? Who stopped the military expansion of communism in Europe?

The answer to this last question might be another: Who handed half of Europe to Joe Stalin (without which the Berlin airlift would not have been necessary)? What Leo Strauss called the *argumentum ad Hitlerum* only underscores the paucity of the communitarian case for launching a preemptive strike against a nation that had never attacked us and posed no threat to the continental United States.

Etzioni was in the vanguard of the War Party in December, 2001, when he argued that Iran was even more dangerous than Iraq. The Iranian people are eager to be "liberated," but "we can't wait" until they liberate themselves, as Iran is working on missiles and nuclear-weapons technology. Which country this threatens—the United States or Israel—he has never specifically said, but Etzioni's main worry is that Iran is inciting Hezbollah to attack Israel *via* Lebanon. Therefore, the United States must invade Iran: It's the "communitarian" thing to do. A few weeks after September 11, Etzioni had come up with the communitarian solution to terrorism: "The way to greatly [*sic*] curtail international terrorism is to do for more countries what we did for Japan after 1945: impose freedom." This is yet another great principle of the communitarian creed that gets lost in all the fluffy rhetoric about "unity," "diversity," and "responsiveness."

There is also, says Etzioni, far too much talk about our "rights," which must be largely sacrificed if we are to survive in the post-September 11 world. On the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks, Etzioni wrote a scaremongering piece for *USA Today* claiming that it is just a matter of time before another massive terrorist attack occurs and that we must not be "complacent." The danger, he averred in *National Review*, could be avoided if we would only institute a national identity card: Sure, "many Americans have long had a strong visceral reaction against required I.D. cards, which they associate with 'domestic passports' used in the Soviet Union," but they will get over it. Etzioni calls them "safety cards," in true fuzzy-wuzzy communitarian fashion.

On the subject of Israel, the communitarian position is that she can do no wrong: The "wall of separation" being constructed by the regime of Ariel Sharon, abhorred by the world—and even the U.S. government—is just fine with Etzioni. Oh, and it is a "fence," according to Etzioni, and *not* a wall—one of the finer points of communitarian linguistics.

This partisanship is hardly surprising, coming from someone who quit school at age 18 to fight in a commando unit of the Haganah. His first book, *A Diary of a Commando Soldier*, was a best-seller. The 21-year-old Etzioni was launched on an intellectual odyssey that would take him from the angular militance of his radical Zionist youth to the soft, rounded edges of a communitarian middle age: Inside the latter, however, the steely hardness of the former is detectable, like a saber wrapped in silk. Etzioni's creepier pronouncements all have a similar authoritarian style: He wants you to spy on your neighbors (to make sure they are not committing evil acts) and to shun anyone who swims against the current. Al-

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though I am sure he would not approve of stoning someone to death, Etzioni's ideal society would be, in spirit, the nightmare world projected in Shirley Jackson's classic short story "The Lottery."

In terms of public policy, the communitarian ideology is nebulous enough to take on whatever shape its current host gives it. The Clintonians and the Blairites made use of Etzioni, but now it seems he is going where the real money—and, more importantly, the real power—is: the big neoconservative foundations. George Washington University hosts his Center for Communitarian Policy Studies as well as a Department of Communitarian Studies, where Ronald Radosh, the neoconservative historian and pro-war polemicist, holds court. Hundreds of thousands of dollars from the John M. Olin Foundation and other neocon big-money outfits have been poured into Etzioni's attempt to marry the moral premises of socialist humanism with the neocon agenda of decreased liberties and perpetual war. In 1999, Etzioni received $215,414 from the Smith-Richardson Foundation to do communitarian outreach in Hollywood; the previous year, he had garnered $45,426 for seminars lecturing the media on how to be more "responsible."

Etzioni's incorporation into the neocon Borg is clear enough when it comes to foreign policy: The wishy-washy rhetoric, the palaver about "dialogue" and "diversity within unity" is thrown overboard, and Etzioni bares his teeth. In an op-ed piece for *USA Today*, shortly after September 11, he not only supported launching a new cold war against the entire Arab world but opined that we ought not to pretend that Islam is not the enemy: In the communitarian view, it is a danger on a par with the threat formerly posed by communism. "The problems [*sic*] with the new antiterrorist agenda is not that it is too grand, but that it is not grand enough."

Whether the unctuous exhortations of communitarianism and the beatific bromides of "compassionate conservatism" make for a good match depends, one supposes, on the vagaries of fortune. Etzioni has spent years following one political leader after another, with mixed results: In aligning himself with the neocons, maybe this time he will hit it big.

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AMERICAN EMPIRE

Our Triumph in Iraq

by Doug Bandow

Iraq is conquered; unfortunately, winning the peace is proving far more difficult. Bringing down an unpopular, isolated dictatorship in a wreck of a country is one thing. Creating a liberal, multiparty, multiethnic democracy where one has never existed is quite another.

Officially, the Pentagon proclaims that we will stay "as long as necessary" and leave "as soon as possible." That is a worthy policy, but it will be attainable only if Washington sets modest goals and a firm departure date.

Unexpected opposition to the U.S. occupation has caused the Pentagon to delay withdrawing American forces. Forget dropping to 30,000 troops by the end of the year, as promised by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Instead, analysts are talking about pushing the total up from 160,000 to 200,000 or even 300,000. To find the troops necessary to maintain even the smaller garrison, the Pentagon has announced that occupation tours will run one year, twice the typical tour in Bosnia and other "peacekeeping" operations.

Nevertheless, advocates of nation-building are advancing an expansive agenda. As *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof argues,

> To leave behind a stable Iraq, we must establish order, nurture a free press and independent police force, purge the civil service of Baath thugs, help Iraqis write a constitution and hold local and national elections. All that will take a year or more.

Actually, far more than a year.

Unfortunately, there are few successful models upon which to draw for Iraq. America's obvious successes are Germany and Japan, yet neither looks like Iraq: Both had ethnically homogenous populations, democratic traditions, and an educated, professional class. The U.S. effort was widely viewed as legitimate by all major international players and the two countries' neighbors, which had suffered the most at their hands.

While the Germans and the Japanese seemed to react similarly to the people of Iraq—expressing relief at foreign liberation but resentment at foreign conquest—they had no illusion that an occupation would be brief. Abu Eslam Saqir, a spokesman for the Iran-friendly Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, however, says: "We wanted the international community, including Americans, to help us get rid of Saddam's dictatorship, not impose their will on our nation."

Most important, Germany and Japan were real nations, while Iraq has never been one. She consisted of three provinces under the Ottoman Empire and owes her current borders to British nation-builders. The gulf among Kurds, Shias, and Sunnis is enormous. Moreover, the first two groups are drawn to allied peoples outside Iraq.

Unfortunately, Iraq looks more like several countries where American attempts at nation-building have so far failed. In Somalia, for instance, the U.S. military thrust itself into the bloody conflict among competing warlords in the name of delivering humanitarian relief. Local combatants successfully manipulated Washington into taking sides. The attempt to seize warlord Muhammad Aideed led to a vicious firefight in Mogadishu, killing 18 U.S. Rangers and as many as 1,000 Somalis in 1993. The United States withdrew, and the local combatants eventually wore themselves out. Today, Somalia has achieved some degree of peace, if not unity.

In 1994, the Clinton administration used the threat of a U.S. invasion to force *junta* leader Raoul Cedros from power in Haiti. Washington installed Jean-Bertrand Aristide in his stead. Alas, Aristide, though more popular than Cedros, was no less authoritarian. Attempts to restore the economic infrastructure, train a police force, and promote democracy have largely come to naught. With great fanfare, the United States managed to replace a military dictatorship with a presidential one.

The 1995 Dayton Accord led to a nation-building exercise that continues in Bosnia, a purely artificial country. Bosnia is made up of three warring groups, two of which want to join coreligionists in neighboring states. Bosnia exists today only because of foreign military occupation now approaching its eighth year. Bosnia is still ruled by a "High Representative" who interferes with local elec-

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tions, censors the media, and makes national policy. He has even chosen the currency and the national anthem. Corruption is rife, particularly in the Muslim enclave, which receives the most foreign aid. There is no reason to believe that Bosnia will ever be a real country.

The experience in Kosovo is even worse. After going to war to stop ethnic cleansing, the United States presided over the territory while our erstwhile allies, the Kosovo Liberation Army, murdered hundreds of Serbs; ethnically cleansed nearly a quarter of a million Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and non-Albanian Muslims; and despoiled Orthodox religious sites. Violence remains a serious problem, as KLA members have taken over organized crime and formed the quasistate's police force. Yet the West holds Kosovo in an autonomous limbo: The Albanians want independence, while the Serbs want to reassert Belgrade's control. After being empowered by Washington, the transformed KLA mounted attacks to the north in Serbia and to the east in Macedonia.

Examples in the Middle East and the Muslim world look no better. Two decades ago, many Shia Muslims in Lebanon greeted Israeli invaders as liberators. The Shiites shared little affinity with Palestinian guerrillas, who had dominated their territory and turned it into a target for Israeli military retaliation. War raged among Muslim sects, however, while Israel allied herself with contending Christian militias. Eventually, residents hated Israeli occupation even more than that of the PLO, and the Shia Hizbollah movement proved to be as deadly a foe of Israel as is the PLO.

Lebanon offered no better an experience for America. In 1958, a temporary U.S. military intervention seemed to help stabilize the government. In 1983, the United States jumped into the ongoing Lebanese civil war on the side of the minority Christian government, which ruled little more than Beirut. Washington turned itself into a combatant and was rewarded with a bomb blast that took out a barracks and killed 241 Marines. Washington quickly redeployed its forces on ship and sailed away.

Today, Afghanistan is also turning ugly. Although Washington expeditiously defenestrated the Taliban government and its Al Qaeda allies, more than a year of occupation has left Hamid Karzai more as mayor of Kabul than as president of Afghanistan. Bloody factional fighting wracks the country.

As yet, Karzai does not even trust his safety to Afghan bodyguards. In order to extend Karzai's power, U.S. forces are increasingly intervening in local squabbles—for instance, bombing two contending warlords to Afghanistan's west near Iran last December. "It's all tribal now," declares Whitney Azoy, a former U.S. diplomat. "The US military is being used for these personal vendettas, and they don't have the experience in this region to realize it."

Yet American action no longer goes unchallenged. With some regularity, American soldiers are being ambushed and killed in southern Afghanistan. There are more and more attacks on aid workers and tourists as well.

While most Afghans remain pleased at their liberation from Taliban rule, many are chafing at America's continued control: Washington carries out searches and detentions on its own authority and has been widely criticized for the war in Iraq. America won no friends when troops arrested Naeem Koochi, an influential tribal leader, on his way to Kabul to meet with government officials, and transferred him to Guantanamo Bay over the protests of the Karzai government. Public demonstrations greeted the accidental killing of four Afghan soldiers in Kabul.

Nor has the West bought much progress in reconstruction with the $800 million spent last year by various aid agencies. Scott Baldauf, South Asia bureau chief for the *Christian Science Monitor*, observes:

> Despite some positive signs in Afghanistan over the past year—children going to school, homes being rebuilt, wells being dug—there is much about postliberation Afghanistan that hasn't changed during President Hamid Karzai's first months of power. Businessmen complain about harassment by corrupt policemen and thuggish soldiers. All but the bravest women still wear sky-blue burqas, their only protection from the hungry eyes of gunmen. Some villages are so far away from doctors or medical clinics that preventable diseases like polio and measles are making a comeback.

He is not alone in his assessment. In the *Washington Post*, Marc Kauffman writes:

> Virtually every significant system in the country is broken. The military is splintered by factionalism, the police force is untrained, the justice system is dominated by religious conservatives who have more in common with the Taliban than with Karzai, and tax collection is largely ineffective. Even the driving rules are in disarray.

I cannot help but recall the Soviet experience: In the beginning, Moscow quickly occupied Afghanistan and faced only modest opposition. A decade later, it withdrew in the midst of disaster. Baldauf worries that, "For all the appearances of stability, Afghanistan is tottering at the edge of civil war. It needs only a nudge." His driver proclaims: "The only thing that keeps this country from going back to the Taliban are those B-52s."

None of these experiences means that nation-building cannot ever work in a non-Western country. They do suggest, however, that nation-building is an enormously difficult enterprise, best carried out in narrow circumstances—ones, alas, not present in Iraq.

Having invaded Iraq, Washington has little choice but to help rebuild that nation. However, America's basic objective should be to safeguard U.S. security, not to inaugurate an Iraqi New Deal. That means being less concerned about whether Iraq holds together, who rules Baghdad, and how the country practices her politics, and more concerned that any new regime traffic in neither weapons of mass destruction nor terrorism. And it means getting out quickly, so as not to create both a permanent grievance and a target for America's many enemies in the region.

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CHRISTIANITY

Goin' Places

by Aaron D. Wolf

Willow Creek Community Church belongs in the suburbs, its massive campus sprawling across a stretch of drained swampland in greater Chicago. The members of Willow Creek are, by and large, suburbanites, and the "programming" behind the "services" at Willow is custom-made for them. The at-

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tendants wear polo shirts; the messages are relevant; and all of the members of the band and the drama team are committed to *excellence*.

"And He gave some apostles, some prophets, some lead guitarists . . . " This is most certainly true, because, as Bill Hybels, the founder and "lead pastor" of Willow discovered, "lost people matter to God." Unbelievers—the "unchurched," in Willow parlance—are turned off by poor-quality musicianship and acting in church; *ergo*, if we care about lost people, we simply will not set before them thespians or adult-contemporary artists who are not appropriately gifted. We will, however, provide them with a food court (a "safe place" for "meaningful dialogue"), group therapy (a "small group" in which to become a "fully devoted follower of Christ"), and lots and lots of *community*. The midweek services at Willow—designed for members (averaging 7,000 in attendance), as opposed to the weekend "Seeker Services" (averaging 17,500)—are the "New Community."

According to Bill's wife, Lynne (in *Rediscovering Church: The Story and Vision of Willow Creek Community Church*), Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian, Hybels' mentor, inspired Bill in the mid-70's to "do something truly great with your life . . . commit yourself to Jesus' vision of establishing communities of God here on this earth." On another occasion, "Dr. B." advised Bill to "just do Acts 2!"

Just doing Acts 2, Hybels programmed an environment free of the trappings of traditional Christianity—the stained glass, the pulpit, the hymnody—which were, in his estimation, stifling genuine community. He freely admits that he was embarrassed when, back in high school, he had brought the "wildest kid in school" with him to his staunch Dutch church, filled with the "already convinced." After the

> ancient hymns . . . it went south. They did a stand-up-sit-down thing several times, and the kid never did catch on. He listened, mystified, as a vocalist sang of seraphim and cherubim. Then there was the Creed. This was a hit, since the veterans had it memorized and Bill's friend had to stand there conspicuously mute. . . . Then came the sermon. *No, please no, not the minor prophets*, Bill pleaded silently. But sure enough . . . Amos . . . locusts . . .

This attitude toward the biblical traditions of the Church is increasingly common. Most traditional churches today have either succumbed to this mentality—to varying degrees—or have at least encountered it, usually in the face of a vociferous group demanding that *this church wake up to reality before it is too late! If lost people matter at all to us, we must be willing to change!*

Willow has been one of the chief vehicles effecting that change. Churches of any denomination that are hemorrhaging members or are just bored with Amos and locusts can join the Willow Creek Association and, for an annual fee of $249, retain the consulting services of Willow and be provided with musical tab sheets, relevant sermon ideas, and a plan to create genuine "biblical" community. This plan is, in fact, a "proven process" to make your church "contagious . . . no matter its size, style, or location." To put all of this into perspective, consider: There are now over 9,500 churches, of various denominations, in the Willow Creek Association; the entire Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod consists of 6,145 congregations.

What is this elusive *community* that these churches so desperately covet? And, isn't it a little bit ironic that suburbanization, the very thing that destroyed real communities all over the United States, is being applied so passionately to the Church, in an attempt to restore community? Hybels and his wife describe their dreams of establishing an Acts 2 church in this way:

> We dreamed of a place where the Word of God would be communicated in an irresistibly compelling way. . . . of people getting together informally in small groups and meeting in homes and taking meals together and talking about real-life issues. . . . of a church that would be distinct and countercultural, in which affluent members . . . would funnel their excess resources back into the local fellowship for distribution to the needy.

Isn't this what Saint Luke describes when he records that "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need"? Not quite. The events of Pentecost centered on and were shaped by Saint Peter's preaching of the Gospel, and the Jerusalem community that arose after "they that gladly received his word were baptized" was devoted, first and foremost, to the "apostles' doctrine." God's Word itself gave birth to that community, not the careful programming of the Twelve.

As E. Michael Jones points out in this issue, suburbanization is a means of control, power, "management." The ethos of the suburbanite, by design, is servitude, deracination, discomfort. Those who were driven or lured to the suburbs left behind real communities rooted in time and place. They exchanged their ethnic and cultural identities for sameness. All of the houses looked the same, and all of the people began to look and sound the same. All of them consumed the same mass media and ate at the same chain restaurants. These were the first "new communities."

The Willow Creek model suburbanizes both Christians and churches. It steals away people from dowdy, established, Amos-and-locusts churches and cuts them off at the roots from their historic traditions, liturgies, and neighborhoods. They even have their own mass media to inculcate sameness.

And what of those "seekers" longing for community, those lost people who do indeed matter to God? The Willow Creek model draws them to the "Seeker Service" not through the prophetic, apocalyptic preaching of the Apostles' doctrine ("Men of Israel . . . Jesus of Nazareth . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up . . . ") but by the same cultural ethos to which they are enslaved—the therapeutic message of a Jesus Who meets the felt needs of suburban life.

So powerful is the darkness of the hour, so deracinated are the Christians that attend the remaining traditional churches, so divorced are they from their own theology, that it is only a matter of time before someone asks your pastor, "Have you ever heard about a place called Willow Creek?" The signs that this has already happened are obvious to those who are properly catechized: the emergence of the word *unchurched* in place of *unbelievers*; the addition of a "contemporary" service; the removal of the pulpit; the proclamation of a need for a "small-group ministry"; or, the most obvious, the announcement of plans to sell the old building, badly in need of repairs anyway, and to purchase some "prime acreage" at the edge of town.

Aaron D. Wolf, the assistant editor of Chronicles, *is a Church historian.*

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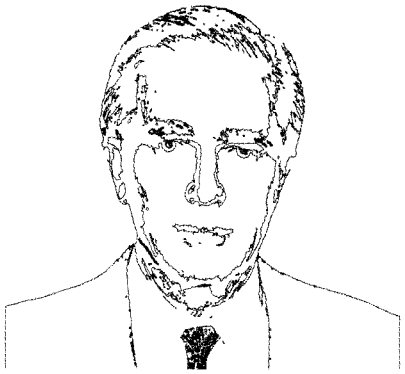
by George McCartney

The Human Element



Intolerable Cruelty
Produced by Alphaville Films and Imagine Entertainment
Written and Directed by Joel Coen and Ethan Coen
Distributed by Universal Pictures

Lost in Translation
Produced by American Zoetrope and Elemental Films
Written and Directed by Sofia Coppola
Distributed by Focus Features

Intolerable Cruelty should by prosecuted for intolerable smugness, the besetting sin of its authors, the filmmaking brothers Ethan and Joel Coen. Venial in the past, their high-handed self-satisfaction has turned mortal here, curdling what should have been a creamy evocation of the screwball comedies Hollywood produced so reliably in the 1940's.

The story begins as a promising send-up of America's eighth sacrament, divorce, and the priests who administer it, the order of "matrimonial" attorneys. George Clooney plays Miles Massey, divorce lawyer to the rich and vile. We first meet him at his dentist's office, having his teeth whitened as he conducts business on his cell phone. With dental gauze covering his face, we see little more than his choppers exercising themselves in the glare of ultraviolet light. He is visually reduced to what he has made of himself: a mouthpiece of insufferable smarminess. In the following scene, we find him in his own office tending to the woes of an adulterous blonde whose wealthy television-director husband has caught her in bed with another man. She is unnerved at the prospect of losing the lavish life her husband has afforded her. Massey listens with seeming sympathy, turned in his chair to display himself in a flatteringly slender three-quarter profile. It is his practiced posture, doubtlessly borrowed from TV anchormen who simulate trustworthy gravitas on air while hiding any indication of unseemly girth. It would not do to let *hoi polloi* notice that you are living large on their miseries. Having heard the poor woman's sordid tale, Massey quickly reassures her by shuffling its elements for jury consumption. In his improved narrative, the lady comes upon her husband having a lover's argument with the other fellow. Although shocked to discover her husband is homosexual, she nevertheless heroically intervenes before he can do violence to his inamorata. When Massey pauses to see how she is responding to his legal guff, her initial misgivings fade in the dazzle of his pearly whites.

So far, so good. But Massey's radiance pales by comparison when the incandescent Marilyn (Catherine Zeta-Jones) shows up. She is the wife of his next client, a bumptious realtor who has been stupid enough to marry this conniving vixen without an "impenetrable" Massey prenuptial contract. Now that he has followed his "wandering pee-pee" into legally demonstrable adultery, Marilyn is preparing to nail him to the wall and his assets to her bank account.

I should not give any more away, although you will probably be able to negotiate most of the film's twists well in advance of the usual signposts announcing lust and greed. This predictability is part of the problem. Tone-deafness is the other. When the otherwise comic script willfully detours into homicidal territory, its wheels lose the road for no better reason than that the Coens want to include some cool, smart-alecky gags. This reckless driving is all the more disappointing because Clooney and Zeta-Jones play their parts so well.

As the apparently suave, in-control lawyer, Clooney has never been funnier. He more than justifies all the comparisons to Cary Grant that he has garnered over the years. He is an indictably handsome leading man, supremely negligent of his classic good looks. When Massey is called on the carpet by his boss, Clooney transforms himself so thoroughly that he resembles a fifth grader who has been caught using a four-letter word. His languidly athletic stance suddenly goes knock-kneed, as though he is wetting himself. His deep tigerish eyes widen and somehow sag at the corners, pleading that he not be subjected to the paddle. For her part, Zeta-Jones balances her fully ripened womanhood (you don't have to be acquainted with the checkout gossip rags to know she's had babies) with an icily calculating demeanor, a high-wire act guaranteed to drive insecure roosters like Massey wild. This battle of the sexes is carried off deftly enough at first, although never with the élan of a Preston Sturges or a Billy Wilder. Nevertheless, if the script had not taken its fatal turn, the Zeta-Jones/Clooney *trompe l'oeil* might have put this film in a league with Sturges's *The Lady Eve*.

The film's opening credit sequence forecasts its difficulties. Animated cardboard cutouts of Victorian figures in various postures of courtship dance across the screen. Cupids hover everywhere, and golden arrows fill the air. It is a harbinger of the cutout characters that populate the story, men and woman comically rendered two-dimensional by manners and hormones as they play their prescribed roles in a tale of romance and consequence. Even two-dimensional characters, however, must have some behavioral consistency if they are to engage us. The Coens' characters do not. They are merely *papier-mâché* conveniences twisted into arbitrary poses to ridicule American conventions. While I am quite prepared to laugh at divorce and its legal profiteers, I cannot be amused by characters who are cynical worldlings one moment and—hey, presto—love-besotted swains the next. Even performers as accomplished as Clooney and Zeta-Jones cannot negotiate such instantaneous transformations without a human bridge.

The Coen brothers remind me of Evelyn Waugh's caricature of a Bauhaus architect, Professor Otto Silenus in *Decline and Fall*. Silenus designs sleek glass and aluminum structures and then complains bitterly when he is forced to equip them with such human accommodations as

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staircases and closets. "The problem with architecture," he declares, "is the problem of all art—the elimination of the human element from the consideration of form. . . . All ill comes from man," he gloomily concludes. Despite their devotion to irony, the ever-formalistic Coens seem to have taken Professor Silenus at his word.

Waugh shows up more deliberately in Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*. The film takes place in Tokyo and features a secondary character, a ditsy starlet come to promote her latest Hong Kong action film. She confides to some friends that, for privacy's sake, she has checked into her hotel as Evelyn Waugh. This seems appropriate, since her hotel is one of the many anonymous glass towers that make up the film's locations and might have satisfied Professor Silenus' obsession with characterless architecture—but not quite. Several of these frigidly austere buildings sport walking and talking humans in 40-foot-high video displays. One of them looks mightily like Bill Murray holding a glass of Suntory whiskey under a wryly knowing moue.

Murray is Bob Harris, a married man, a father, and a nearly washed up movie action-hero. He has come to Japan to be filmed drinking this whiskey, a promotional service he is willing to perform for a scant two million dollars. Upon first arriving, he is chagrined to see his image on Japanese buildings and buses. Wincing slightly at the absurdity of his fame, Murray's face registers Bob's regret at finding himself turned into an advertising prop of Brobdingnagian dimensions. The disproportion between this fatuously ideal figure and his aging, disappointed self needs no comment.

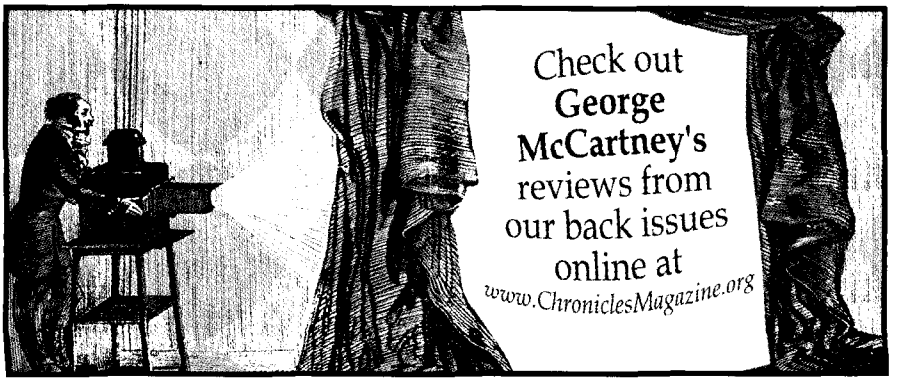
Although Coppola does not possess Waugh's light satiric touch, her reference to him serves as an apt introduction to her characters in this loopy film. Like so many of Waugh's figures, hers find themselves rendered ciphers by the forces of modernity, manifested here as jet-lagged dislocation, celebrity infatuation, and tawdry self-merchandising, all played out against a high-tech urban milieu, glassily impervious to traditional human longings.

Coppola has learned from her father on this score. In his master work, *The Conversation*, Francis Ford used San Francisco's glass-and-steel corporate fortresses with their eerily sound-cushioned interiors to create a soulless limbo in which the high and mighty wield their joyless power. The Tokyo hotel to which the weary Bob is taken by a gaggle of Japanese p.r. agents has the same vacancy about it. Its rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows that only succeed in emphasizing their funereal gray-black interiors. When not being shepherded about by his overly solicitous hosts, Bob spends much of his time sitting on his bed alone and comatose, staring into the blank middle distance. For relief, he goes to the hotel lounge, only to encounter more distorted reflections. Two fans at the bar recognize him and ask if he did his own stunt driving in his films. In the background, an American chanteuse renders Simon and Garfunkel ditties with embarrassing urgency. The American culture of which he is so conspicuously a part does not get lost in translation but ironically clarified. It is as if he were in one of those Kafkaesque dreams in which the strangeness of daily experience suddenly stands out in ghastly relief. Translated to Tokyo, the cultural background of Los Angeles is stripped of its cloak of ordinariness and revealed in all of its surreal banality.

All is not Kafka, however. Bob has a soul companion a few hotel floors away who promises to reorient him. She is 22-year-old Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson) whose photographer husband is off shooting on location, leaving her to fend for herself. She is all too ready to understand Bob's anomie, deprived herself of the habitual props of daily routine and ritual affection. After a few *pas de deux*, she and Bob enter into a wary friendship that wavers at the doorway of romance, never quite arriving at, nor stepping away from, the sill. In the warmth of their mutual attraction, they thaw and squirm free of their emotional deep freeze. Murray's dead gaze begins to twinkle with mischief. Johansson's slow, tentative smiles and defensive smirks turn to open laughter and her plump, ungainly body suddenly becomes gracefully lithe. This is the way with romance: It opens people up to each other, translating their secret languages; it creates a private library of meaning. Estranged from their surroundings, they construct an unlikely existential relationship in which they are free to speak what is unspeakable at home: Bob's self-disgust and fear of death; Charlotte's doubts about her husband and her future. He is charmed by her innocence; she, by his experience.

And that's about it. But it's a pretty hefty it, one rarely dealt with in American films. This is not to say that the film lives up to its critical hype. Some have hailed it as the equivalent of *The Bicycle Thief*, *Rashomon*, and *La Dolce Vita*. In truth, it's a small film with the merest wisp of a plot that profits enormously from the presence of two very substantial performers. They manage to anchor it for a surprising portion of its 100 minutes. Even Murray and Johansson, however, cannot keep the narrative fluff from floating away at times. It would have been far better at half the length, both structurally and thematically.

By going on too long, Coppola risks destroying her moral *donnée*. In order to avoid entering into physical intimacy with Charlotte, Bob takes care to keep up the transparent fiction that their meetings happen more often than not by chance. Stretching the film to 100 minutes, Coppola must strain to come up with different ways for these "chance" encounters to take place. Furthermore, without much of a plot to distract us, she seems to be making her thematic point over and over. It is a shame that films are expected to fit themselves to a studio-prescribed 90-to-120-minute length. This film would have made a wonderful 50-minute feature on an old-fashioned double bill. Still, it is well worth seeing. It does something unheard of in American films today, presenting a man and a woman wise enough not to act on their impulses and thereby drive their respective spouses into the grasping hands of a Miles Massey. c



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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

A Dripping Spring

The parallel trails of brown smoke tracking west to east 50 or so miles ahead above the place where the Grand Canyon ought to be had a sinister aspect, suggesting another greasy invasion by the encroaching metropoli of the desert Southwest.

"Is that L.A.?" I asked Tom Sheeley. "Or is it only Vegas?"

Tom shook his head. "I heard the Park Circus was getting ready to do a controlled burn on the North Rim. You know what a controlled burn is, don't you? Like a controlled deficit, sort of."

At Grand Canyon City on the South Rim, the tourists seethed resentfully, aiming their cameras into the smoky abyss opening away below, like Hell, a few inches ahead of their toes. From the road out to Hermit's Rest, we observed twin smoke columns rolling majestically into the hot blue sky and, below a thousand feet or so, red-and-white choppers trailing orange slurry buckets from a cable, on a bee-line cross-canyon toward the conflagration.

"How'd you feel if you'd traveled thousands miles to see *this*?" Tom asked.

"I know it. If word gets out this really was a controlled burn, the park people could find themselves with a bunch of lawsuits on their hands. It's a good life, America."

Damon's truck was not parked at the trailhead when we got there. "He said he was hoping to make it here by about ten," Tom told me. "It's just nine, now. We'll go on down, set up camp, and drink beer while we're waiting for him."

We finished loading the packs, strapped them on our shoulders, and started down from the Rim by switchbacks descending to the Esplanade. My last time on the Hermit Trail, 18 months before, the vast airy bays between the precipitous canyon walls had been a flat gray with the whirling snow; today, they were suffused by the blue smoke haze. "Like smoking a f---ing pack of cigarettes," Tom said disgustedly.

The world that exists below the rim of the Grand Canyon is different from the one above it. So much is obvious, perhaps, from a look over the guardrail at any one of the several observation points; yet the difference is not what a casual visitor might expect. It is not, for instance, the difference between life and the absence of life, or between activity and primeval stillness. Nor is it a matter of the human world as opposed to the nonhuman one. Besides healthy populations of insects, reptiles, birds, fish, and mammals, there are populations of human beings as well. These, though small, are also healthy. And crazy. Their health, in fact, is in direct proportion to their craziness, which is conclusively proved by their self-destructive behavior and instantly recognizable for the insanity it is by the thousands of sane humans flocking with their cameras and ice-cream cones at the tour-bus stops. We are talking here about the successors to the Indians, river explorers, miners, farmers, and hermits of the pioneer days: the rafters, dorymen, and kayakers, rock climbers, backpackers, adventure photographers, hikers, and runners who inhabit the canyon at all seasons of the year and in every sort of weather, totally unencumbered by any sort of civilized infrastructure beyond a boatload of supplies and a packload of grub, water, and warm clothes to sustain them. You cannot spot them from civilization, and even the boats are barely discernible to the naked eye as they ply the thin green ribbon of the Colorado River, 5,000 feet and more below the South Rim. Yet they are down there nonetheless—invisible ciphers struggling on the tortuous trails scratched into sheer cliff walls, camped in fragile tents beside seasonal creeks and holed up on the extremity of wind-wracked points; running fatal rapids in pea-pod craft and hanging 250 feet above the desert floor from nylon ropes attached to rotten monoliths; filtering water as if life depended on it (it does) and husbanding their final packets of denatured chicken soup; consuming themselves cell by cell and calling it fun, while stopping just short (most of the time) of the boundary beyond which human life cannot be reconstituted, like the Phoenix.

A quarter-mile down, we overtook a middle-aged couple day-hiking in to Dripping Springs, at the foot of the Coconino formation across the head of Hermit Canyon. The man's slung canteen slipped from his shoulder onto the trail as I came up behind; I retrieved the thing and handed it to him in going round them. The canvas was damp from leakage; the soft-sided receptacle slack and virtually empty. "My useless canteen," the fellow remarked, with a smile that made me shudder. Thirty minutes later, at the junction of the Boucher and Dripping Springs trails, I considered leaving a pint bottle propped against the signpost but decided against it. Another half-mile, and he'd have all the sweet, pure limestone water he could hold.

Forty-five minutes out from camp, Tom slipped the shoulder straps on his heavy pack, set the pack down beside the trail, and hiked up a boulder slide to the cache he had put in there the week before. The water, beer, and canned goods added a good 30 pounds to the load he was carrying, without slowing him up visibly. We reached Yuma Point at a little past noon, raised our camp, and sat on the sandstone ledge, hanging our heels above the Tonto Rim 1,600 feet below to eat our lunch. Twenty-five or thirty miles away by line of sight across the Grand Canyon, the twin smoke pillars continued to boil up, tilting eastward under a stiff wind.

"I hope Damon is able to make it down here with us," I said.

"He'll make it, all right. You can set your watch by Damon. Man, I haven't seen a fire like that in the 30-plus years I've been hiking the canyon."

I was digging in my pack for binoculars a quarter of an hour later when a figure in white, wearing a white cap and carrying a red backpack, appeared among the blackbrush and juniper trees, headed for camp. Tom came over to greet him and make introductions, and, when Damon put his hand out, it held a beaded cylinder the size of an oil can.

"That's for all those *Hundredth Meridians*," he said. "It's good meeting you."

Ernest Hemingway only won a Nobel

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Prize. I won a can of Foster's lager from Damon Brown.

We ate an early supper and stood around our improvised sandstone table until long after dark, drinking beer and rum, talking politics, and watching the fires burn beneath the foundations of the starry universe. We turned in around nine, Tom bringing with him inside the tent two liter bottles of water for himself and two of the three pint bottles I kept filled from the quart bottles he'd carried from the cache.

"Drink up, mate," Tom urged. "You can't drink enough water in this heat, and with all this smoke and sh-t."

"If I drink two pints of water, I'll be up peeing all night."

"Who cares? There's worse things in life than taking a leak. You have to stay hydrated, man."

In the morning we separated, Damon hitting the trail back to Hermit's Rest, Tom and I continuing on around Yuma Point and down off the Esplanade to the top of the Redwall by a series of switchbacks and a fearsome rock ledge named by Tom, Cori, and Doug Bonamici of Lake Havasu City the "Hilary Step." After that, there was the nearly vertical notch at the top of the Redwall ahead of us; and, farther down, the treacherous Muav formation, presenting a steep trail descending over rounded yellow stones with the properties of ball-bearings underfoot, before the trail dropped us off the Tonto and through the Tapeats formation into the lush green lap of Boucher Creek, where we could replenish our water supply.

"Are you psychologically prepared for the Redwall?" Tom wanted to know.

"I guess so," I told him. "It didn't seem like any big deal coming up last March."

"It's worse going down. And it's a lot cooler in March than it is in September."

He was long vanished down the vertical green chute choked by blackbrush, catclaw, and cactus when I arrived at the lip of the notch and took stock. Eight-and-a-half ounces of water. Half a Cliff Bar, melting into the foil wrapper. A severe abrasion above the left elbow, caused by a fall down an inclined rock slab. Scratches to the shinbones by the highly aggressive agave plants along the trail. . . . *Eight-and-a-half ounces of water.* They had to get me down to the creek, visible from where I stood atop the Redwall limestone but a good hour's downhill struggle in the 90-degree heat over the damned 500-million-year-old ball-bearings.

The great strain is mental rather than physical—at least, until your legs start to go—owing to the excruciating concentration required to set each foot *precisely* right at every step, on penalty of breaking or "merely" twisting an ankle, pitching forward down a rock slide, or snapping a femur in two and bleeding out from a compound fracture beside the trail. At the base of the Redwall, I stopped to drink and discovered that my right hand was covered with blood from a laceration to the big vein on the back of it. That was not a worry; the water level in my graduated Nalgene bottle was. The descent of a few hundred feet had translated into a ten-degree-temperature increase by my wristwatch thermometer, and I was about to emerge, in a few hundred yards or so, from the shadow of the Redwall into the solar death rays. It can be a fatal mistake when hiking to measure out your life in coffee spoons. I swallowed the whole of my water supply at a gulp and resumed the descent.

Tom Sheeley found me an hour and a half later seated beside my pack on a nasty-looking piece of the Tapeats, with a parched mouth and suffering from a strange systemic weakness. He carried my pack the last ten minutes down to the creek, where he forced me to drank pint after pint of water. "I never felt all that thirsty," I protested, but Tom shook his head. "Thirst isn't a sign of dehydration," he said. "We got down here just in time. I was beginning to hallucinate, myself."

We camped in place that night and in the morning hiked the last gentle mile down to the sandy beach below Boucher Rapids on the Colorado River. Haze obscured Point Sublime downstream, and we made the decision to forego a hike over to Crystal Rapids on account of the smoke. Instead, we drank beer, swam in the river and washed our filthy clothes, and fed the excess rations I was carrying to a pair of ravens that had appeared the instant the first granola bar swam the rapids. Around 4:30, seven kayaks followed by four rafts came ashore, not wishing to tackle Crystal with night coming on, and asked permission to share the beach with us. The canyon was experiencing a heat wave, the leader reported: The thermometer had reached 100 degrees at Phantom Ranch a couple of days before.

Tom got three liters down next morning, and I managed three pints myself before we started back up to Yuma Point. From there, the North Rim fire was more impressive than ever, exploding in sunspot flares against the black horizon beneath its towering self-illuminated cloud. "Ed Abbey's fire tower could be toast by now," Tom suggested.

"It could be. I'm guessing he wouldn't mind much."

"Do you suppose he's really in Hell?"

"I don't know. I like to think God has a use for people like Ed."

"Be sure to bring *at least* a liter of water into the tent with you tonight. Remember, mate: *You can't drink too much water down here.*"

"I'll drink as much as I can manage," I promised.

From Yuma Point up to Hermit's Rest is a relatively easy five miles, the last of them by switchbacks engineered with day hikers between the Rim and Dripping Springs in mind. I reached cruising speed a half-mile from camp and swung along easily under a 30-pound pack, out of sight of Tom Sheeley on the trail ahead, the burning sun on my face alleviated now and again by a cool breeze rising from the depths of Hermit Creek 1,500 feet below. From time to time, I reached the bottle from the stretch pocket sewn onto my pack and drank a little water. I did not feel the heat much, and, so far, I had not had to work very hard. At the trail fork to Dripping Springs, I stopped to replace the water bottle and repack a few items. A mile and a half farther on, I halted again at the foot of the final switchbacks, 2,000 vertical feet below the Rim, to rest my back and take another drink. When I looked at the pack parked upright on a rock beside me, it did not look terribly inspiring. *You brought it down here, you have to carry it back up again.*

I knew before I had gone another mile I was not going to make it up with that pack. Carrying only a daypack, maybe. I took the smaller pack from the larger one, transferred a few valuables and my remaining two pints of water to it, worked my shoulders into the straps, and started up the first switchback. On the second, I started to black out and nearly fell across the trail. A juniper tree in the angle ahead cast a cool blue shadow like a desert mirage. I was sitting in it with my legs drawn up to my chin and the water bottles beside me when Tom Sheeley discovered me a half-hour later.

"So there you are," he said. "Drink this, man." Besides a container of salt and a handful of figs, he had brought a bottle of Gatorade along in his first-aid kit.

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Sometimes, though, you don't even have to try. ·c

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by Mary Kohler

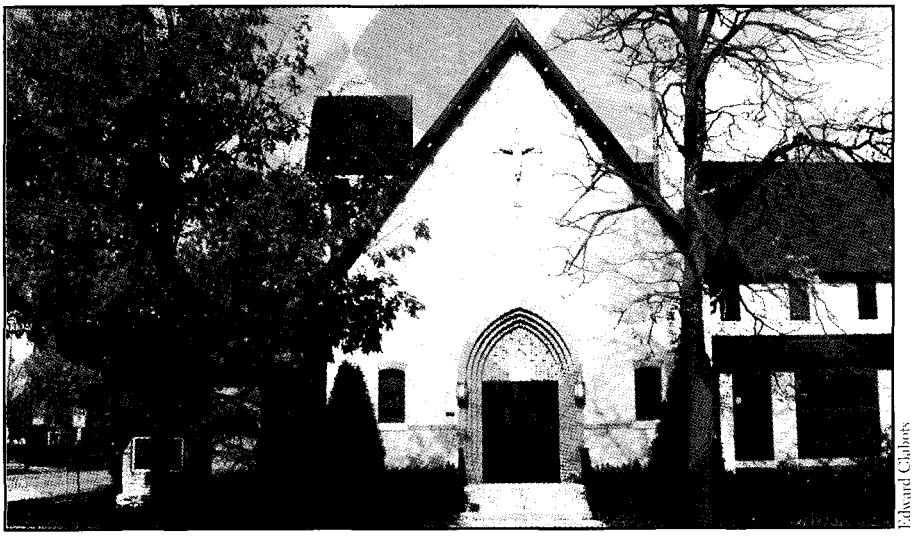
With Darkness All Around

As I drove into town after supper on Sunday evening, the all-too-familiar *boom, boom* of some young man's car stereo assaulted me. Otherwise, it was a lovely fall evening, just dark.

I was on my way to church for a bimonthly service of sung Compline, one of the ancient monastic offices that can be traced to the fourth century. It is the final service before bedtime, with the singing of psalms and the *Nunc dimittis* (the Canticle of Simeon). The version for the evening was partly from the Roman breviary as well as from the Book of Common Prayer.

The church was in partial darkness, illumined largely by the many votive candles in the windows and rood screen. A thurifer appeared from back, incensing the altar. We knelt in confession of our sins, followed by silence. Silence was easy with only seven of us, in addition to the choir.

And so began the psalms in plainsong. Tonight, they were sung by the men of our small, unpaid, but superbly trained choir. Then the lesson from Saint Matthew and a hymn. This old, fine, downtown church has a beautiful Schoenstein organ, recently built, and an organist more than capable of doing it justice. After the *Nunc dimittis*, the Lord's Prayer, and collects, the choir and organ performed superbly to music by Haydn, "Trinity of Blessed Light."



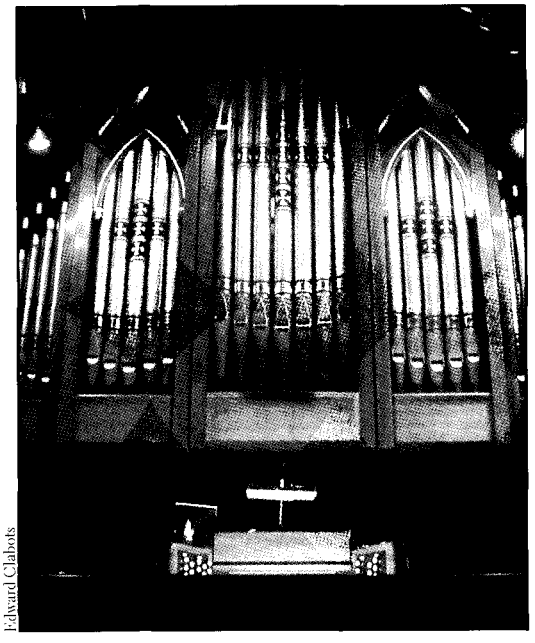
Edward Clabots

Grace Episcopal Church of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Then, they concluded (in Latin), "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope, hail! . . . show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!"

Perhaps if this had cost a large sum to attend, like the local symphony that plays in a large theater, more would have come. The community is invited, and two of the seven of us were not members of the church.

Where are those who love contemplation? Who revere fine music? Are they watching the tube? Or listening to rock or country? Do they have so little musical training that they can only hear pop tunes? Aren't there enough people in Sheboygan to fill this medium-sized church? Are there enough in other towns? Are there even other churches in those towns that offer this superb opportunity? What will the next generations know? c



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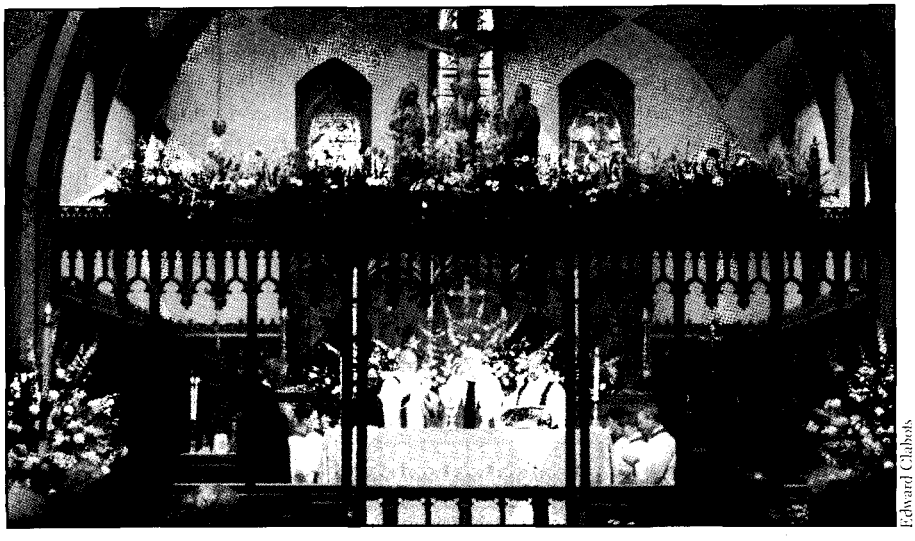
The magnificent organ, high above the nave.



Edward Clabots

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

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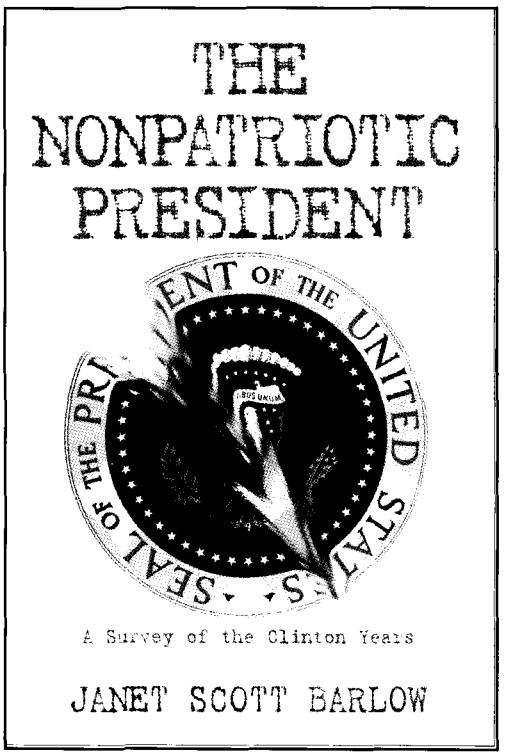

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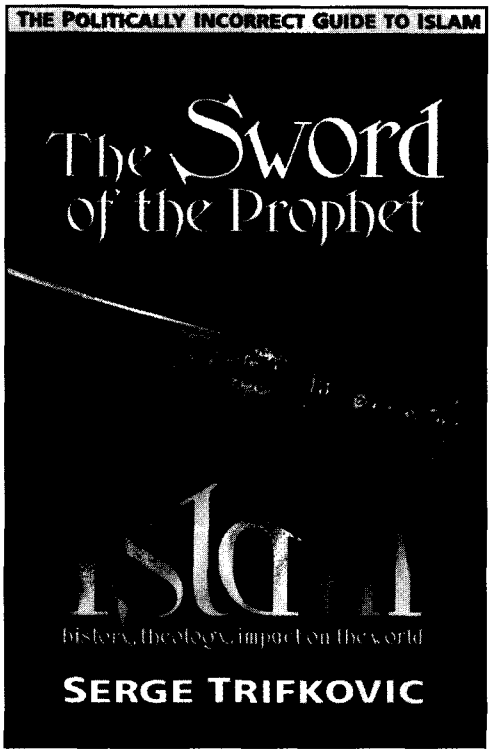

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